UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN DOMESTIC TERRORISM

Mobilization Potential and Risk Factors of a New Threat Trajectory

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AND CHICAGO PROJECT ON SECURITY AND THREATS

Arrest Data Current is March 31, 2021; Survey Data from Feb/Mar 2021

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Presented to

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WHY STUDY AMERICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE TODAY

- **We need a fine-grained understanding of who stormed the Capitol on January 6 and who currently believe the 2020 election was stolen and would participate in a violent protest in order to know who we are dealing with and create viable solutions for the future**

- **We conducted three studies to identify plausible drivers and potential future size of the insurrectionist movement**
  - **STUDY 1**: 377 individuals arrested for Jan 6 assault on Capitol, identifying their demographics and home county characteristics and assessing factors that explain county rate of sending insurrectionists
  - **STUDY 2:** 1000-person nationally representative survey to understand national scope and drivers of the insurrectionist movement
  - **STUDY 3:** 1000-person survey of survey of American conservatives as a separate probe of the scope and drivers of the insurrectionist movement

- **<u>These studies work together</u>: Study 1 uses inductive theory building to provide preliminary evidence for the mechanism. Studies 2 and 3 use surveys to test the evidence in a nationally representative sample of adults and a convenience sample of self-identified conservatives.**

FEAR OF "GREAT REPLACEMENT" MOST CONSISTENT FACTOR ACROSS STUDIES

- **STUDY 1: Odds of sending an insurrectionist is six times higher in counties where % non-Hispanic whites declined.**
- **STUDY 2: CPOST/NORC Survey: Among Americans, believing that blacks and Hispanics are overtaking Whites increases odds of being in the insurrectionist movement three-fold.**
- **STUDY 3: CPOST/MTurk → Among conservative Americans, fear that blacks and Hispanics will have more rights than whites increases odds of being in the insurrectionist movement two-fold.**

IMPLICATIONS

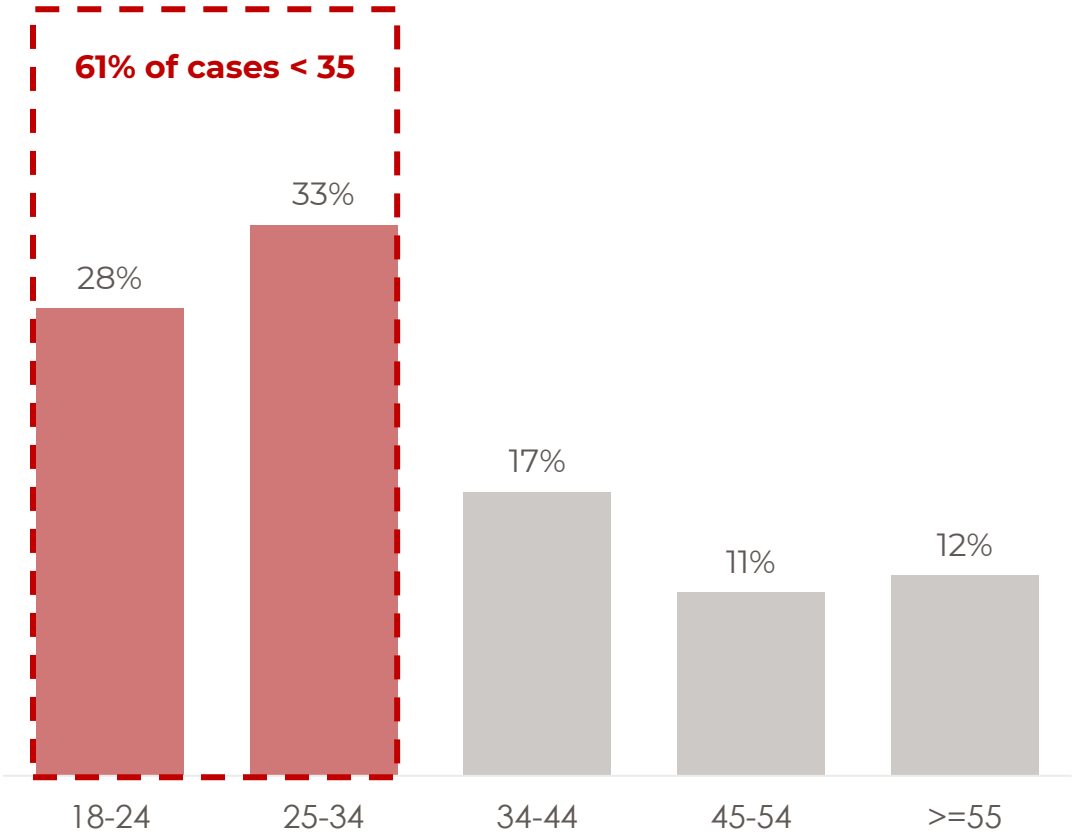
- **What we are dealing with here is not merely a mix of right-wing organizations, but a broader mass movement with violence at its core.**
- **This is fundamentally a political movement, one not only centered in "red" parts of the country, but also consisting of pro-Trump supporters who are in the political minority in many places.**
- **All three studies have remarkably similar findings about the scope and drivers of the insurrectionist movement. Specifically, all three studies find statistically significant evidence that the "Great Replacement" – the idea that minorities will have more rights than whites – is a key driver.**

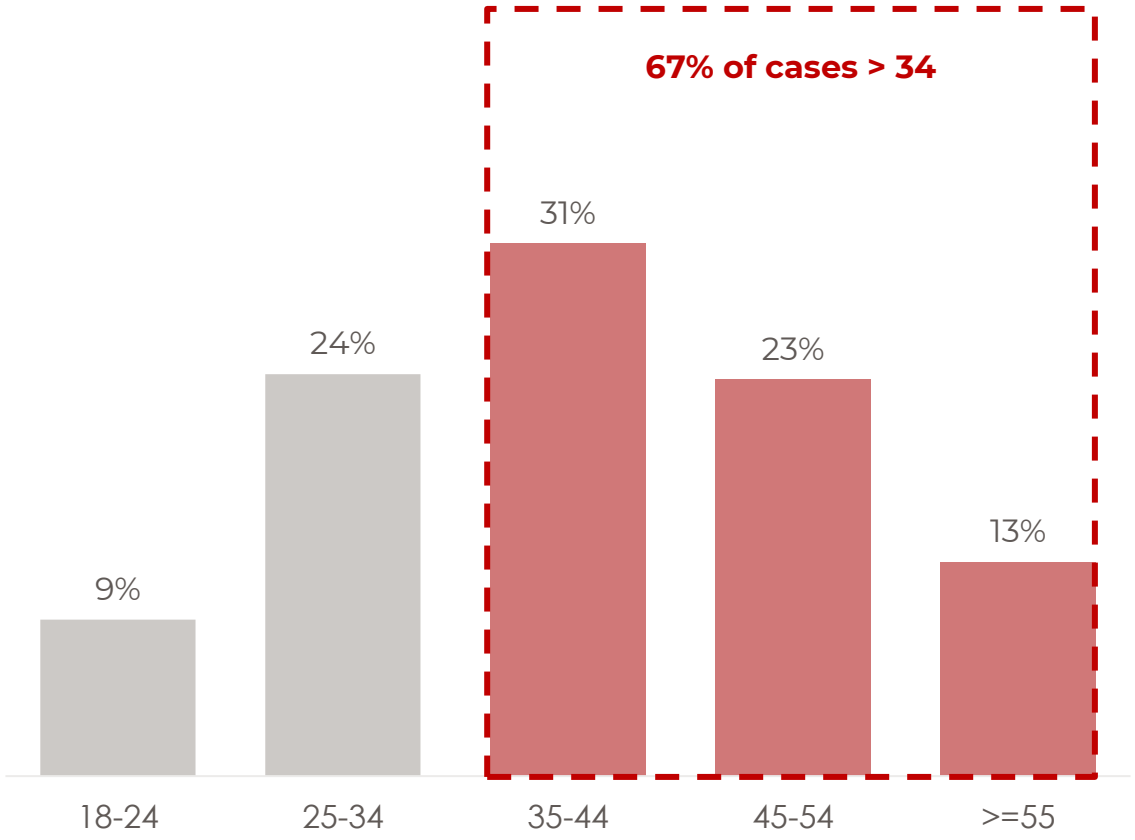
STUDY 1:
WHO ARE THE INSURRECTIONISTS AND WHERE DID THEY COME FROM

STUDY 1 OVERVIEW

- **Assess 377 individuals arrested by FBI, Capitol Hill Police, and DC Police for breaking into Capitol building or grounds on January 6, 2020**
  - Primary demographics (age, gender, race, geography of residence)
  - Socio-economic factors (occupation, prior military/police service)
  - Affiliation in militias/organizations/groups existing prior to 2021
  - Using court documents and media sources
- **Assess factors across all US counties to predict sending increasing odds of sending insurrectionists**
- **Compare to rightwing individuals arrested by US law enforcement for deadly violence, 2010-2020**

INSURRECTIONISTS ARE MUCH OLDER, NOT JUST AGING OF POPULATION

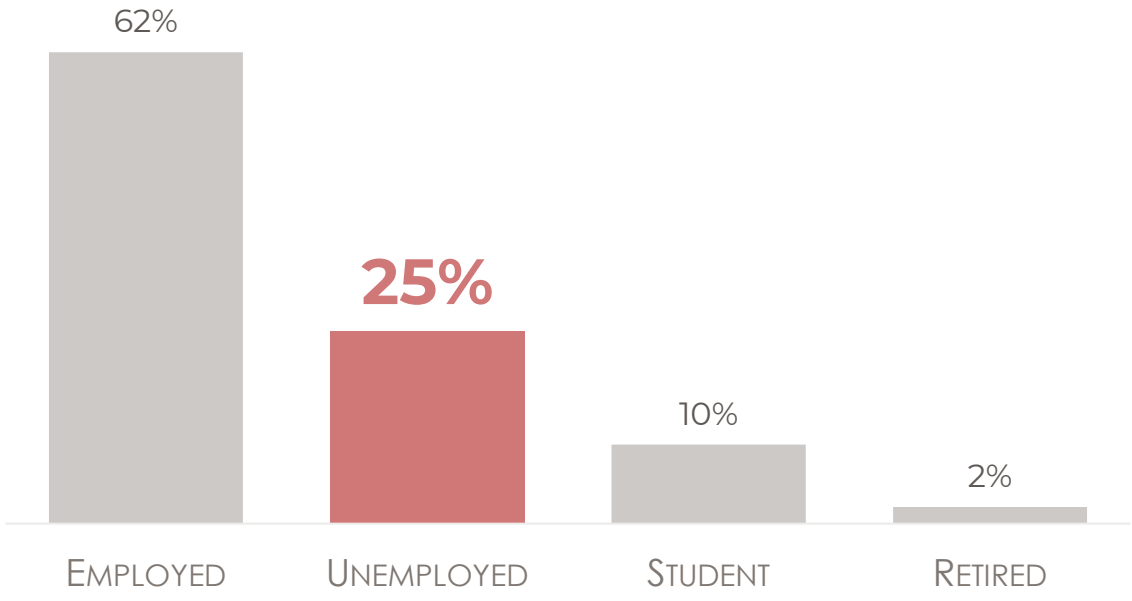




Note: Age known for 326 of 377 cases.

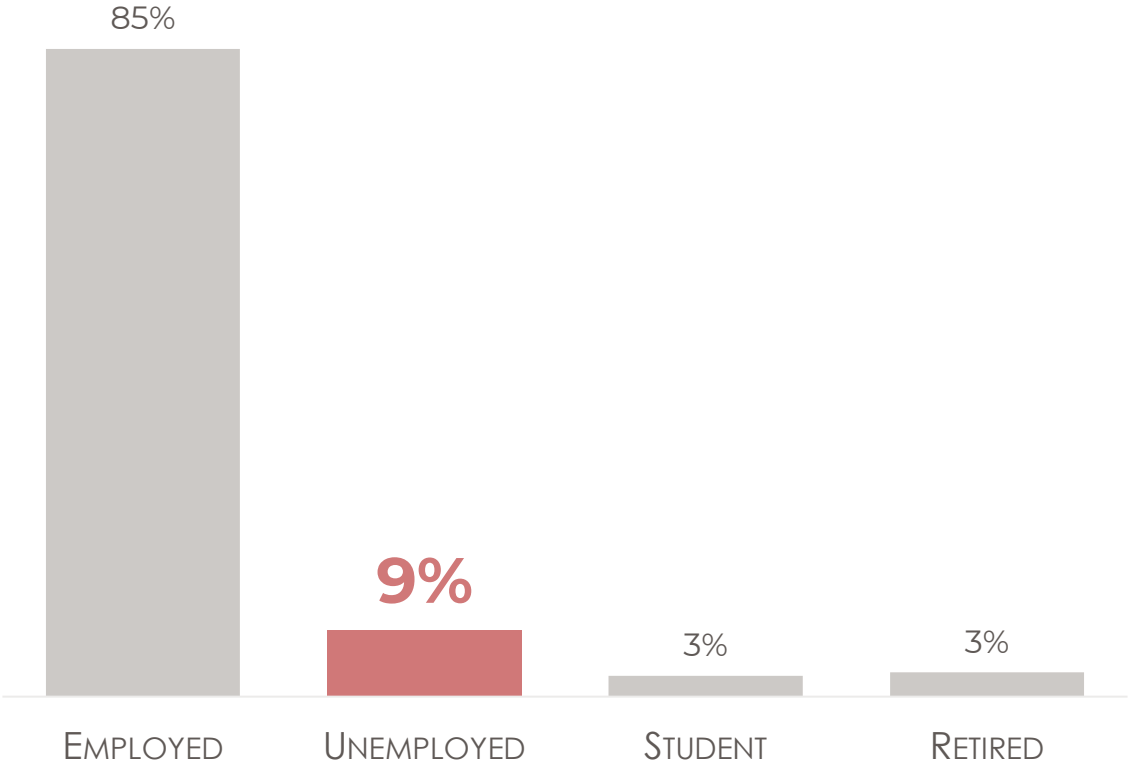
MANY FEWER UNEMPLOYED

Right-wing Extremist Arrests, 2015-2020



Note: Occupation available for 182 of 387 cases. Source: START, PIRUS.

Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021

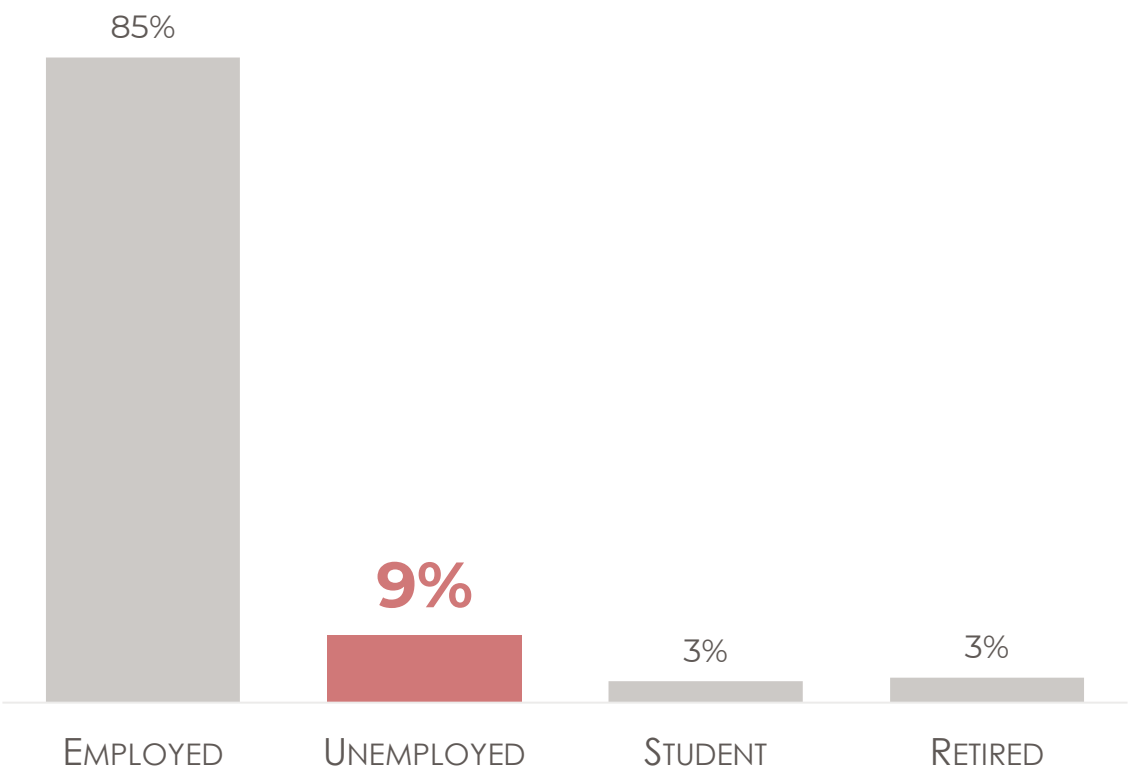


Note: Occupation available for 218 of 377 cases.

MANY BUSINESS OWNERS/WHITE-COLLAR

- **Business Owner: 14%**
  - Owner, Ameri-I-Can Ammo
  - CEO, marketing firm Cogensia
  - Owner, Wholesale Universe, Inc.
  - Owner, Matador Sport Fishing
- **White-Collar: 30%**
  - Google Field Operations Specialist
  - Regional Portfolio Manager at BB&T Bank
  - Doctors, Attorney, Architects

Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021



Note: Occupation available for 213 of 377 cases

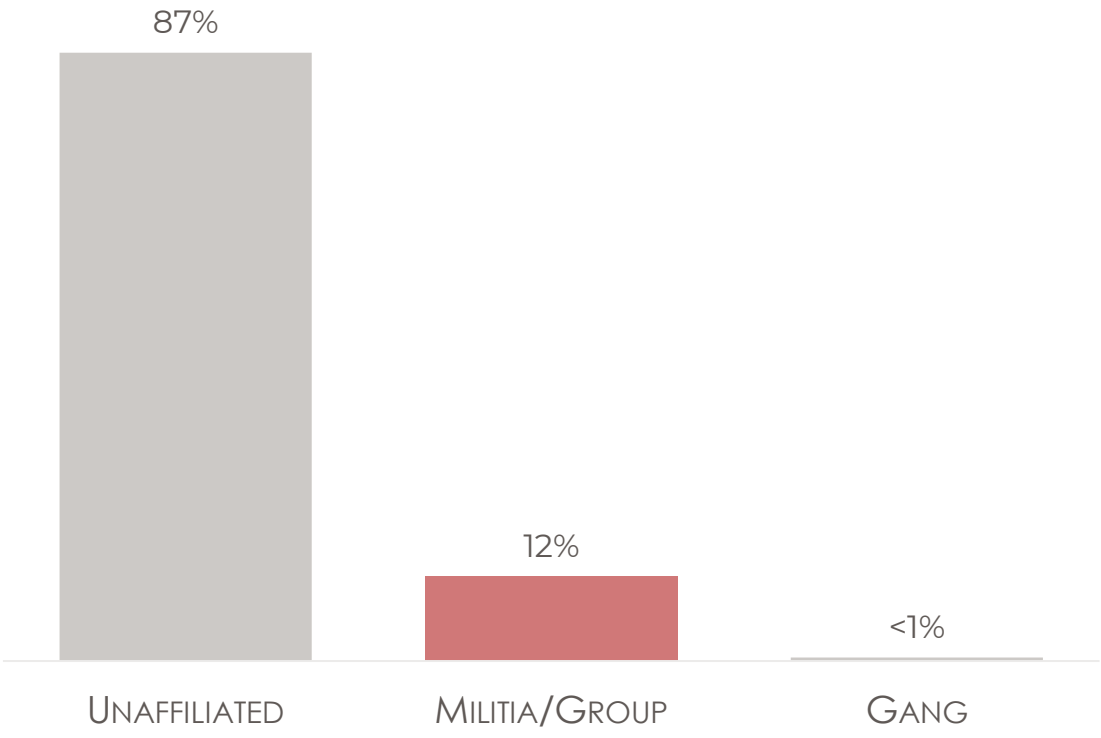
SPECIFIC FINDING #1

The insurrectionists' demographic profile is different compared to past right-wing extremists.

MILITIA/VIOLENT RIGHT-WING GROUPS INVOLVED

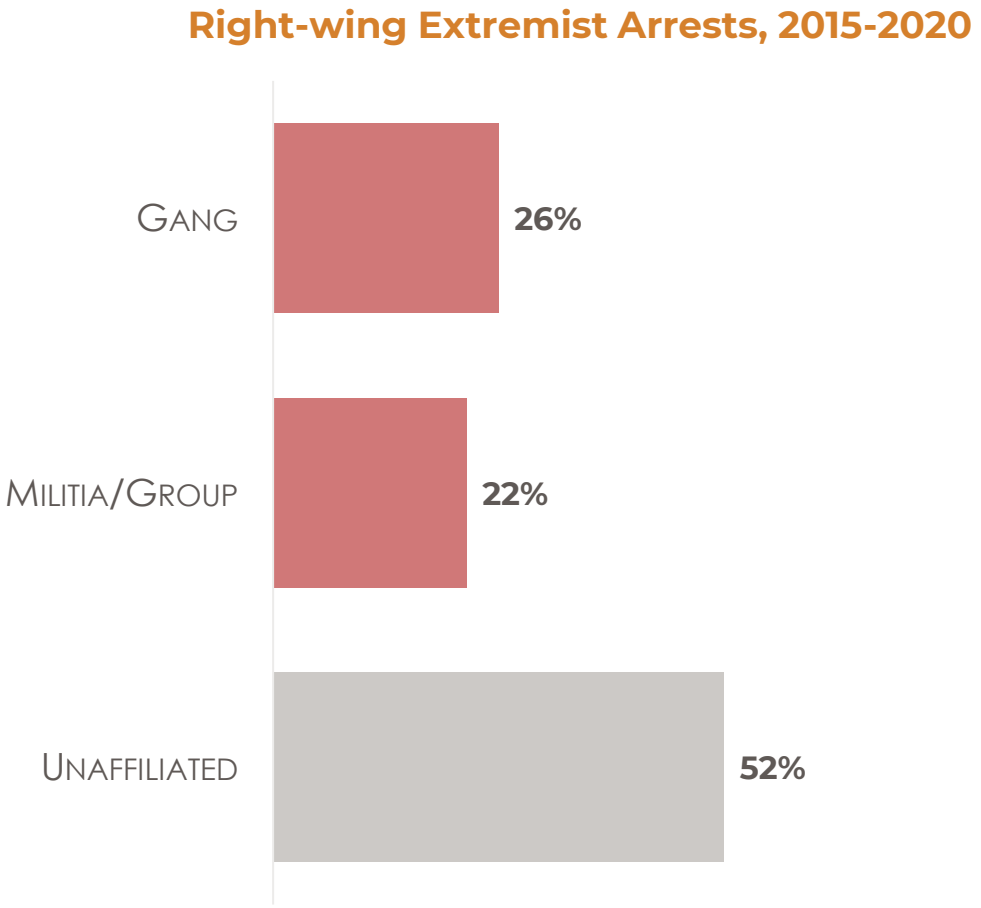
- **Proud Boys: 25 arrested**
- **Oath Keepers : 13 arrested**
- **Three Percenters: 6 arrested**
- **Aryan Nations: 1 arrested**

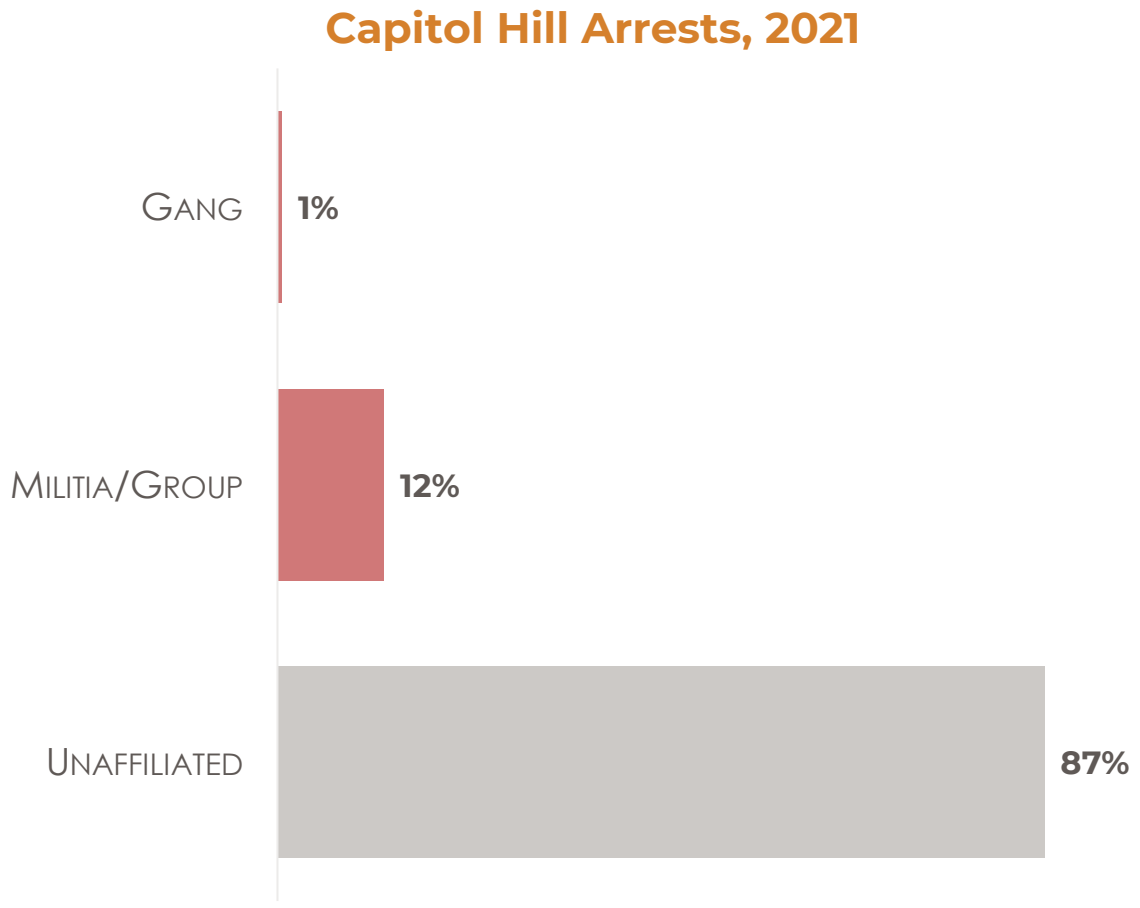
Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021



Note: 377 cases

FEWER MILITIAS, ALMOST NO GANGS





Note: 108 cases

Note: 377 cases

SPECIFIC FINDING #2

The vast majority have no connection to existing far right militias or groups

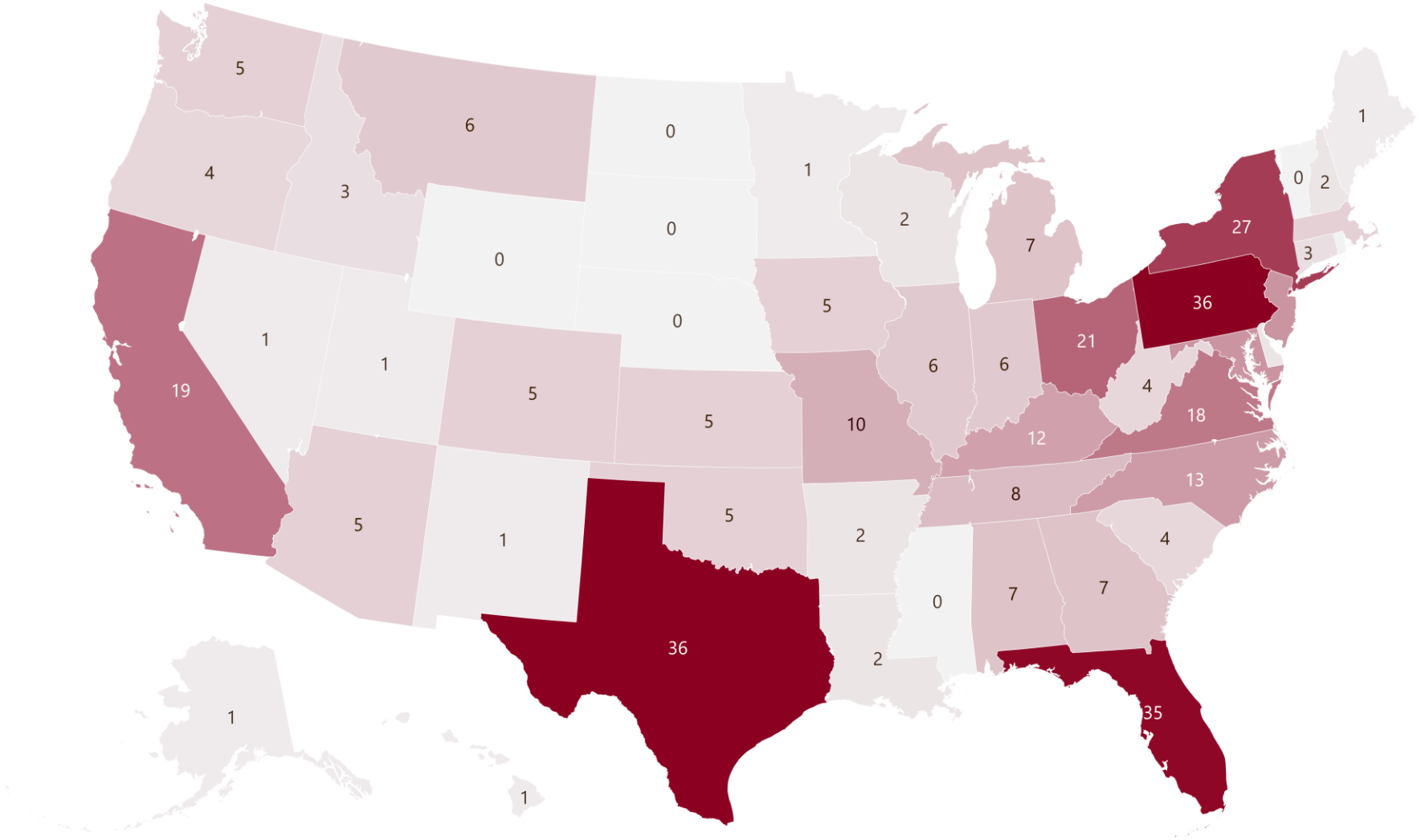
“Normal” pro-Trump activists joined with the far right to form a new kind of violent mass movement

WHERE THE INSURRECTIONISTS CAME FROM AND WHY

Analysis of sending counties vs US counties overall

INSURRECTIONISTS FROM 44 STATES

Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021

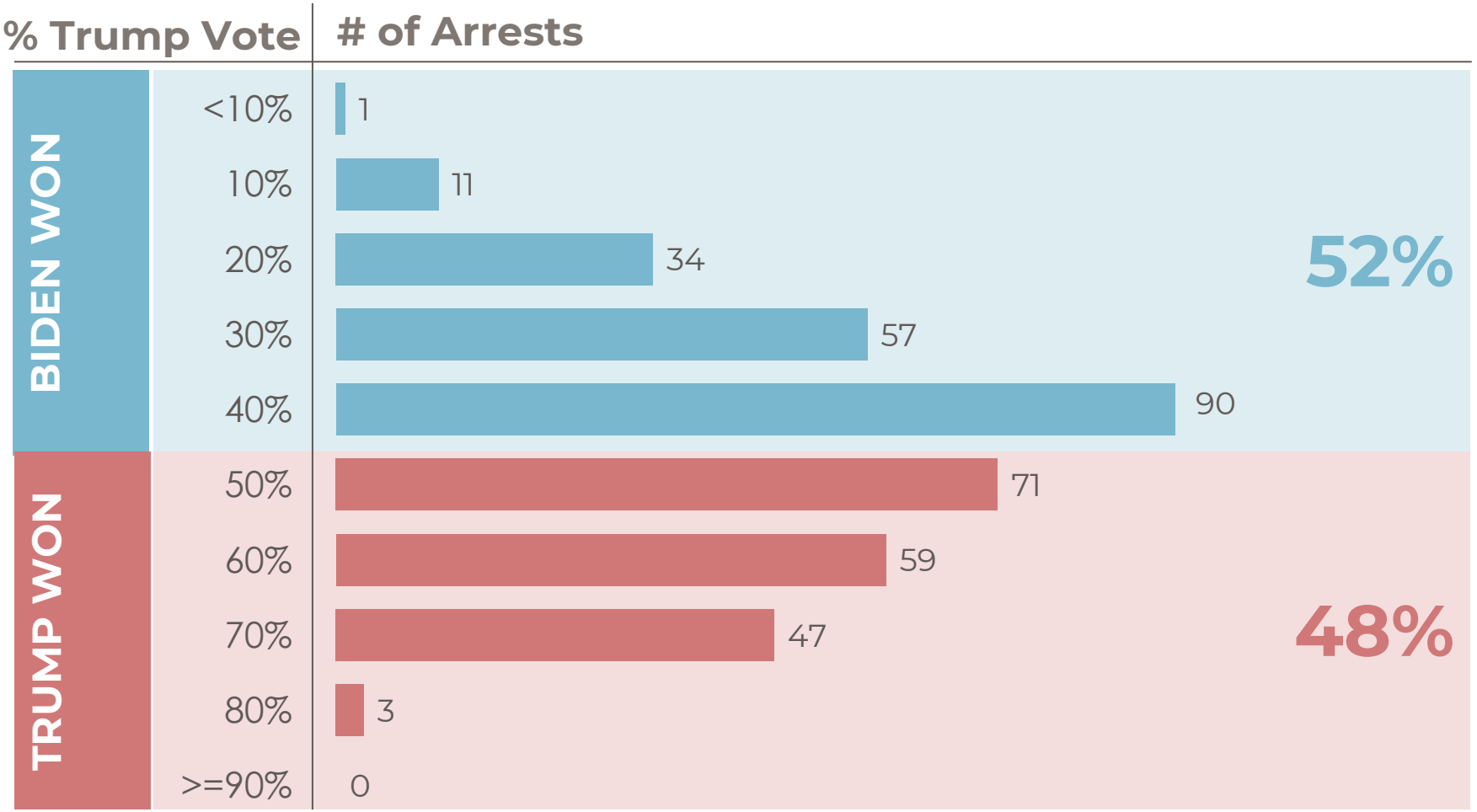


Note: Home states for 377 individuals charged with unlawfully entering the US Capitol. Current as of March 31, 2021.

MORE FROM COUNTIES BIDEN WON

Capitol Hill Arrests By Home County % 2020 Trump Vote

- 377 arrests as of March 31, 2021
- 373 arrested with known county
- 250 unique counties



Source: David Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections

DALLAS COUNTY

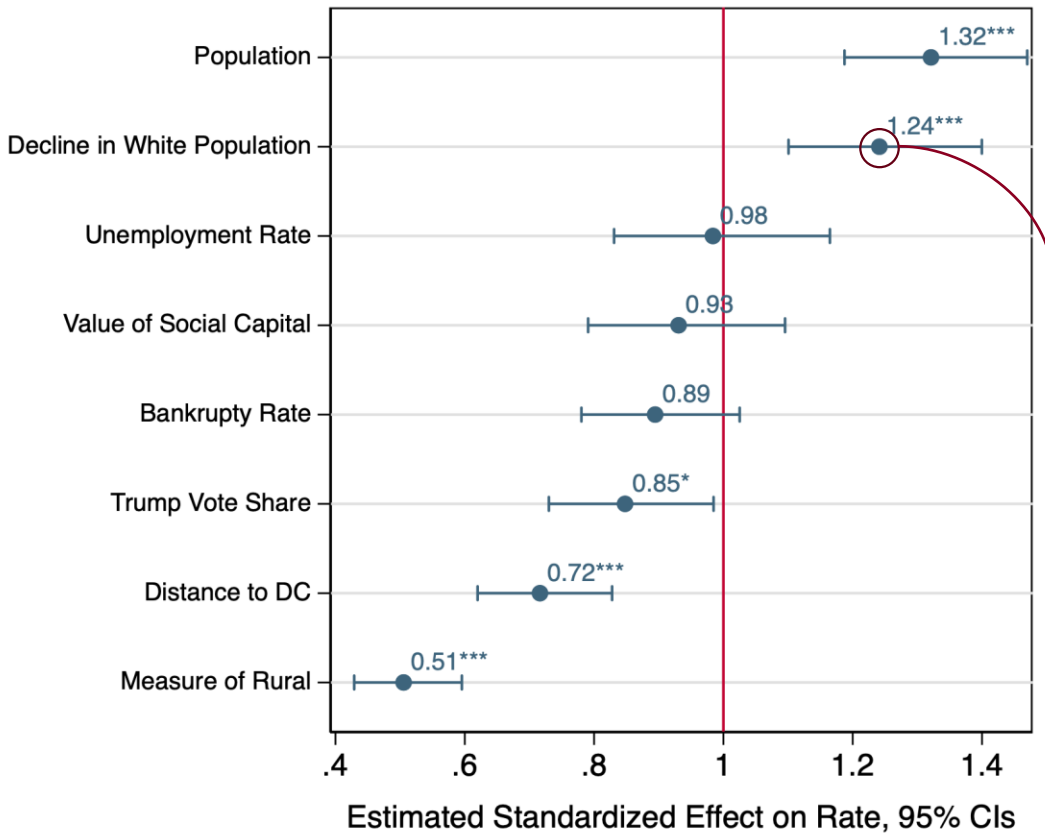
- 6 Insurrectionists
- 67% White
- Average unemployment
- 65% Biden vote
- 307,000 total Trump voters
- Over 80 counties like this, most in large urban areas

Note: Arrest data current as of March 31, 2021

ORIGINS OF INSURRECTIONISTS

Estimating county rate of insurrectionists across all US Counties

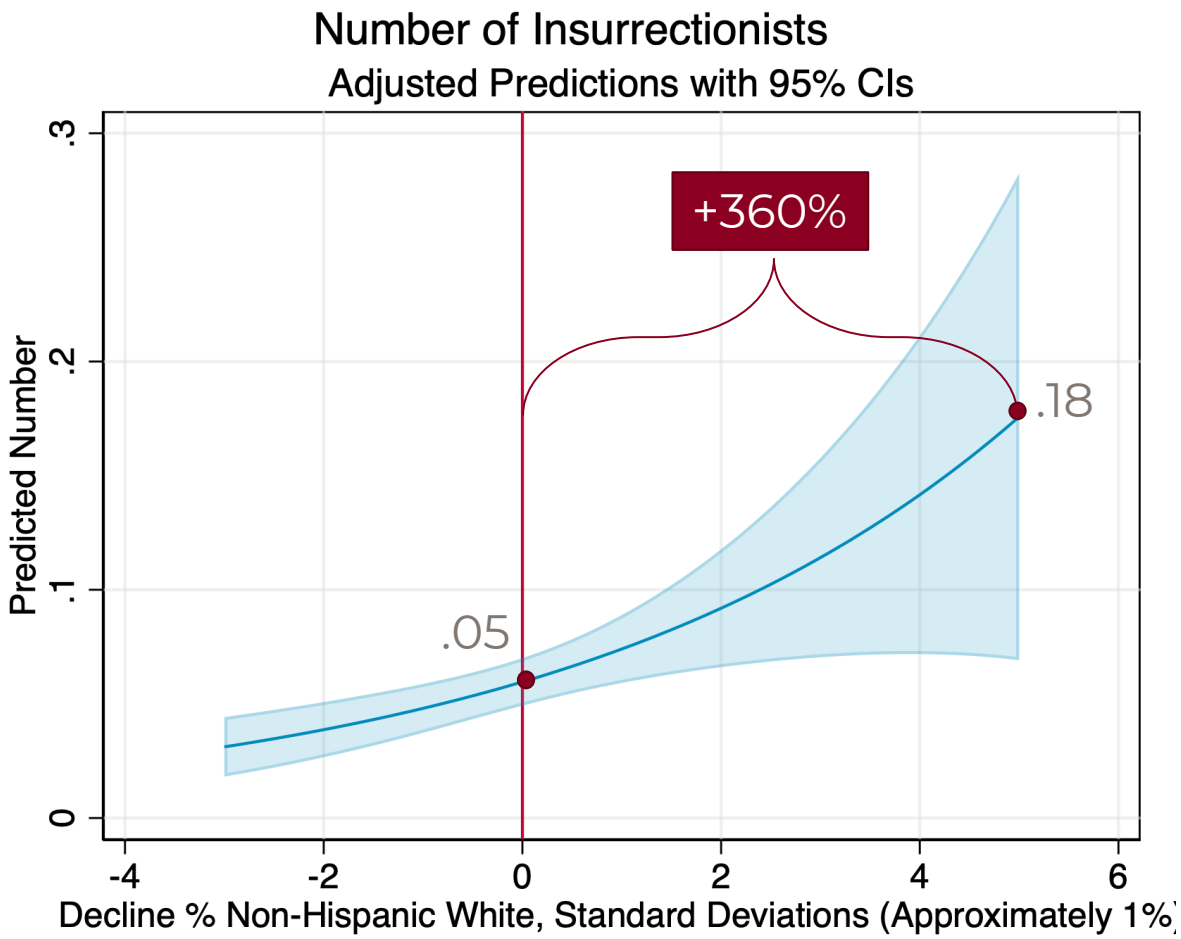
Regression Results (Negative Binomial)



- The **more rural** the county, the **lower** the county rate of sending insurrectionists.
- The **higher the percent of county vote for Trump**, the **lower** the rate of sending insurrectionists.
- The **greater the decrease in non-Hispanic white**, the **higher** the rate of sending insurrectionists.
- For every 1% decline in the white population, the number of expected insurrectionists increased by 24%. This would happen by chance less than 1 in a thousand times.

ORIGINS OF INSURRECTIONISTS

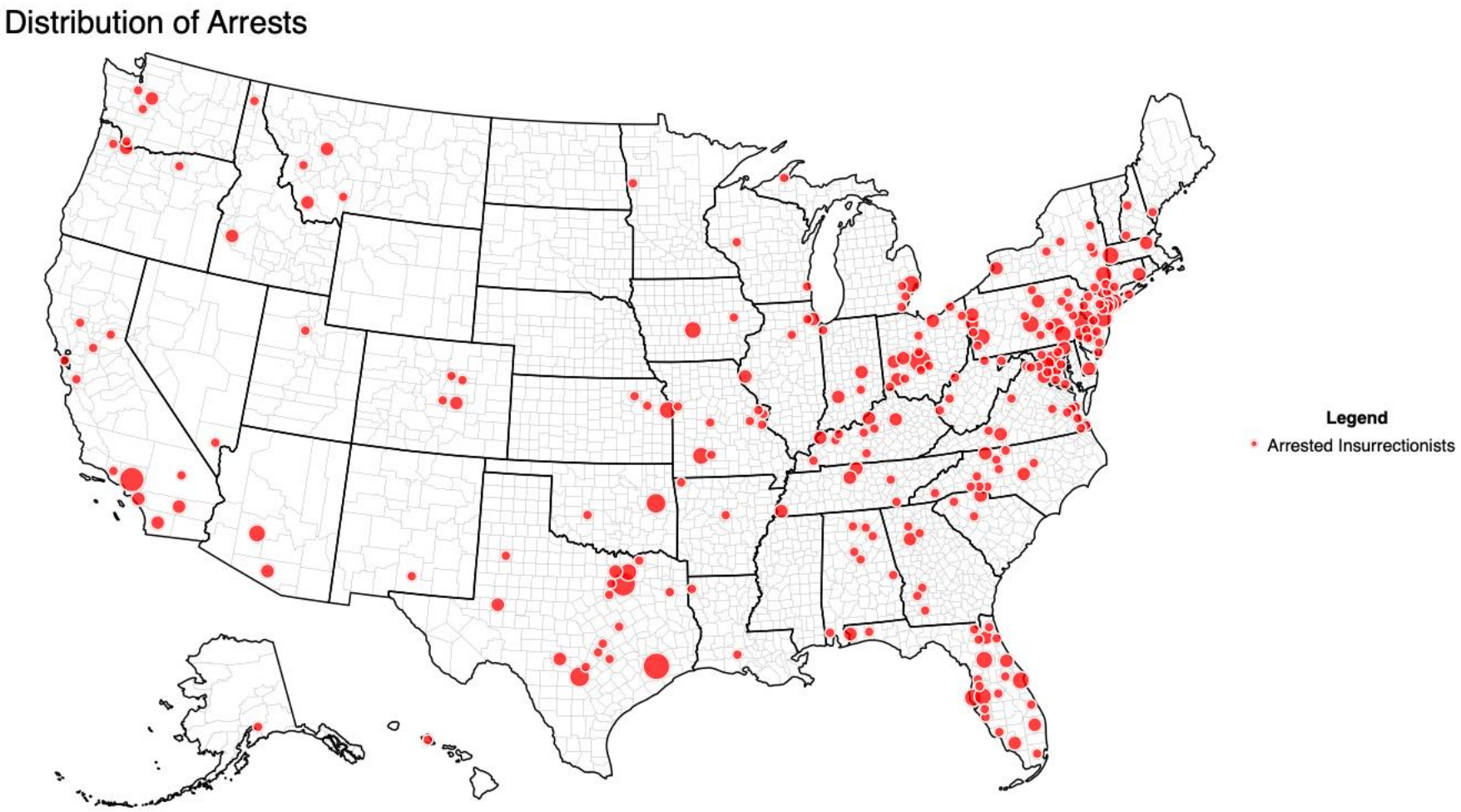
Rate of insurrectionist is four times higher in counties where % non-Hispanic whites declined the most.



EXAMPLE STATES IN MAPS

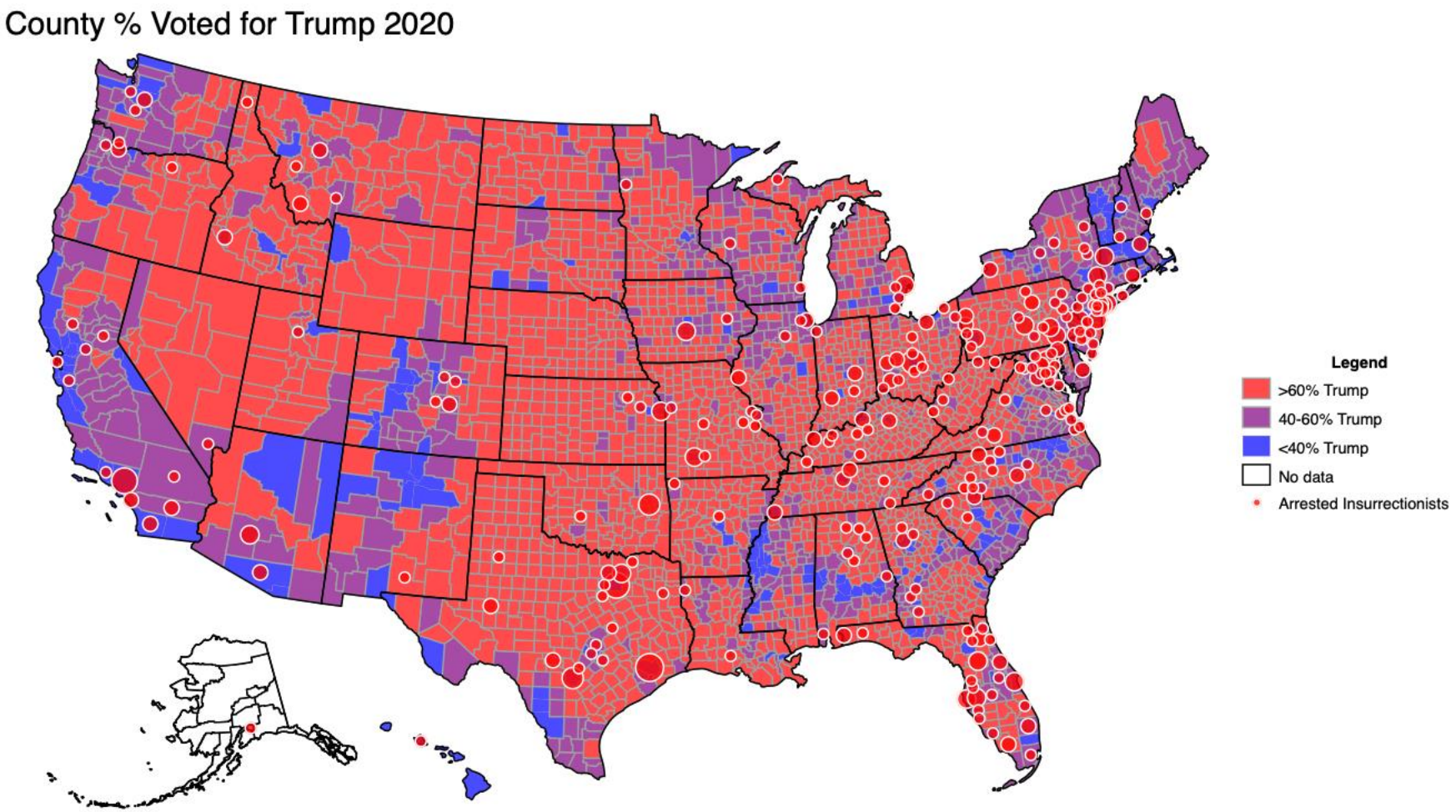
Visualizing the counties that produced insurrectionists in relation to those that did not

UNITED STATES



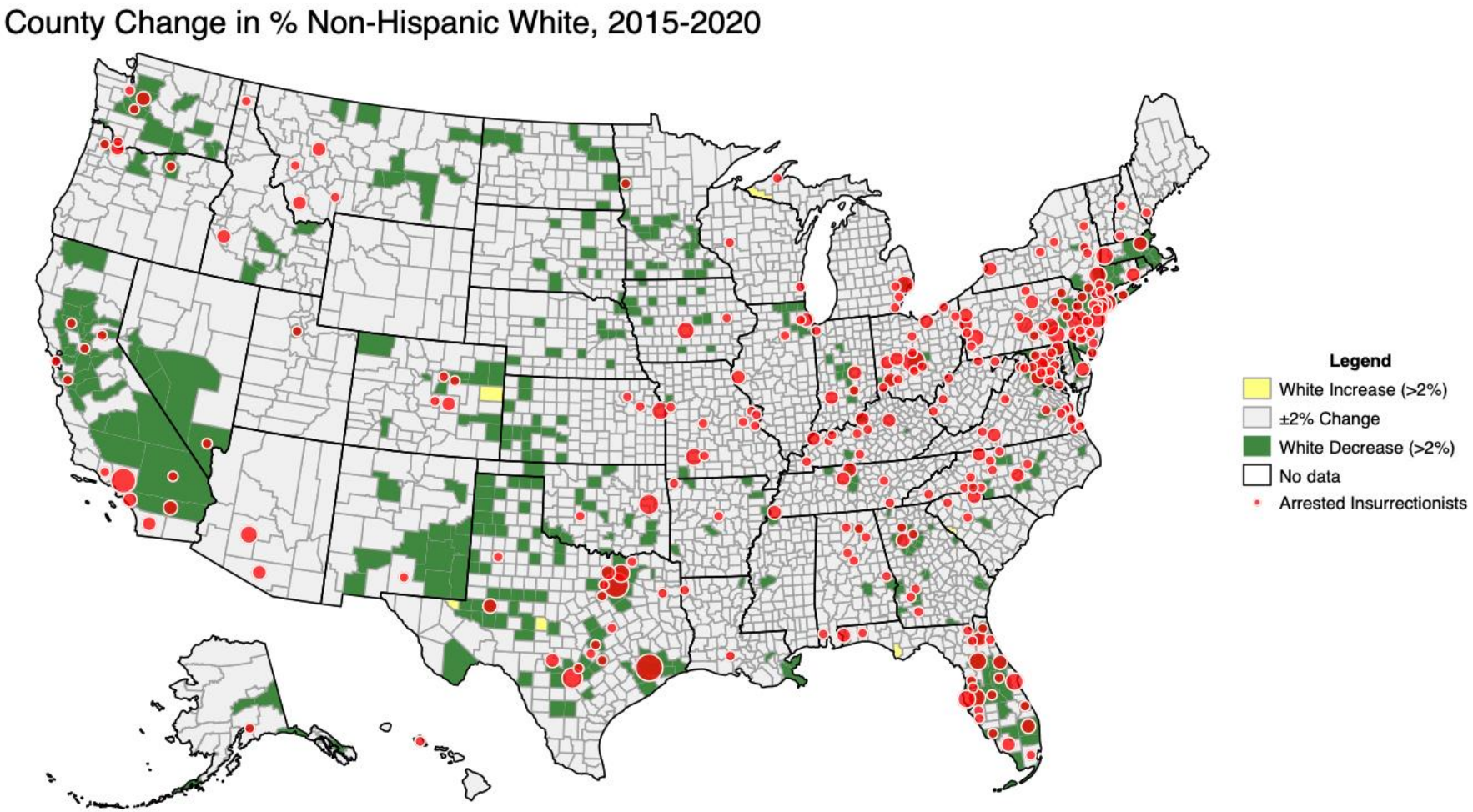
Note: Arrest data current as of March 31, 2021

UNITED STATES



Note: Demographic data from US Census; arrest data current as of March 31, 2021.

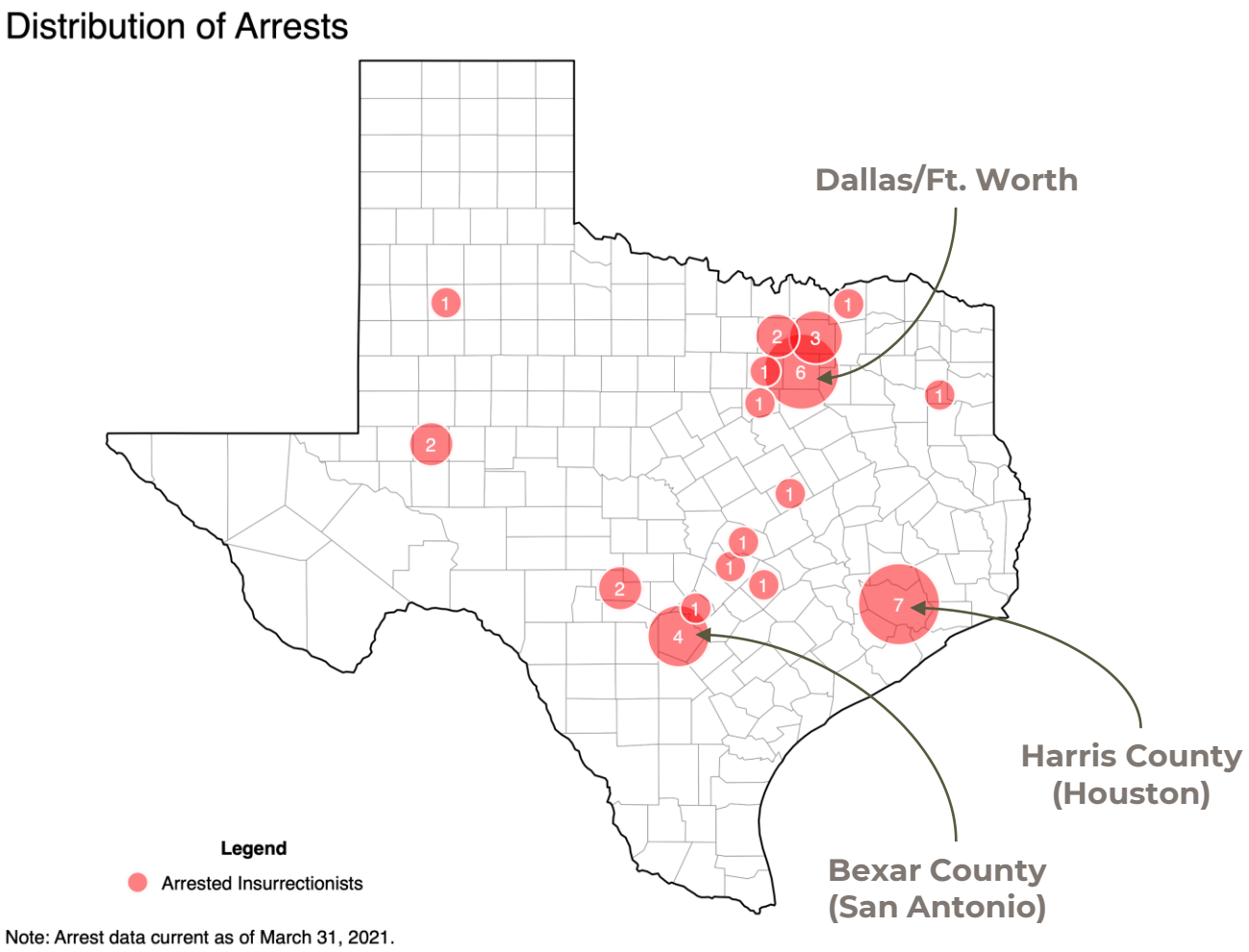
UNITED STATES



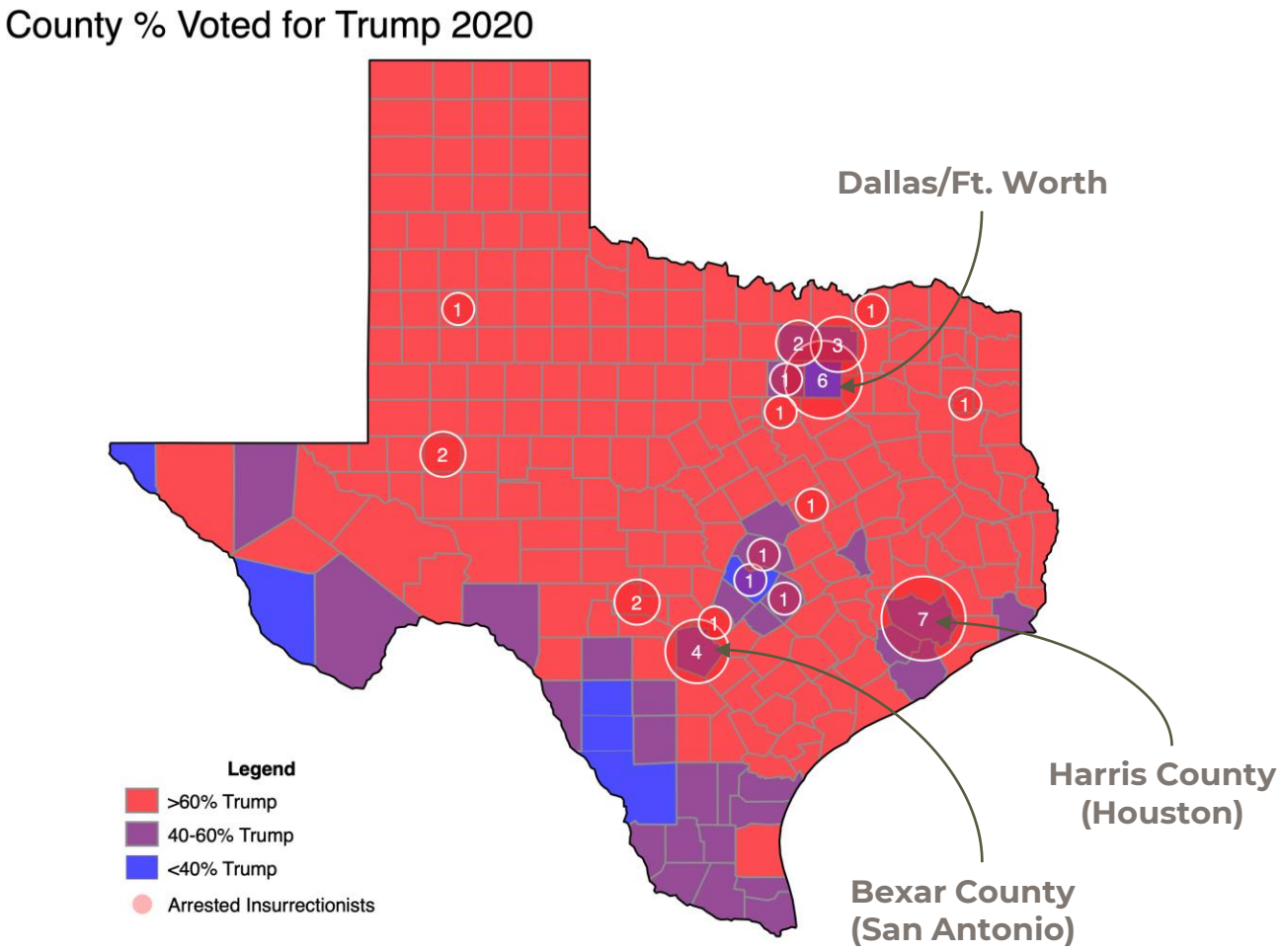
Note: Demographic data from US Census; arrest data current as of March 31, 2021.

TEXAS

36 arrests across 14 of Texas' 254 counties



TEXAS

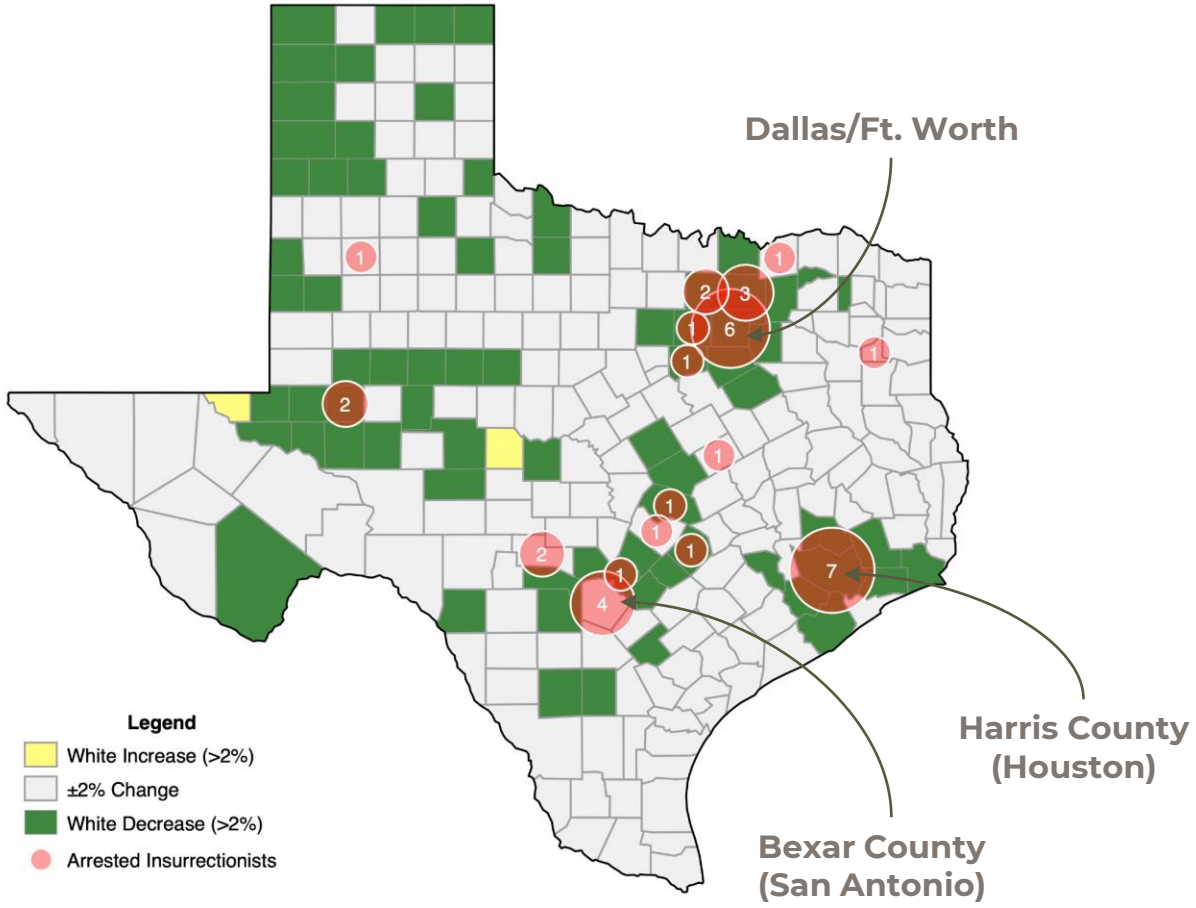


Note: Demographic data from US Census; arrest data current as of March 31, 2021.

TEXAS

Arrests in/adjacent to counties that became less white

% Change in Non-Hispanic White Population, 2015-2019



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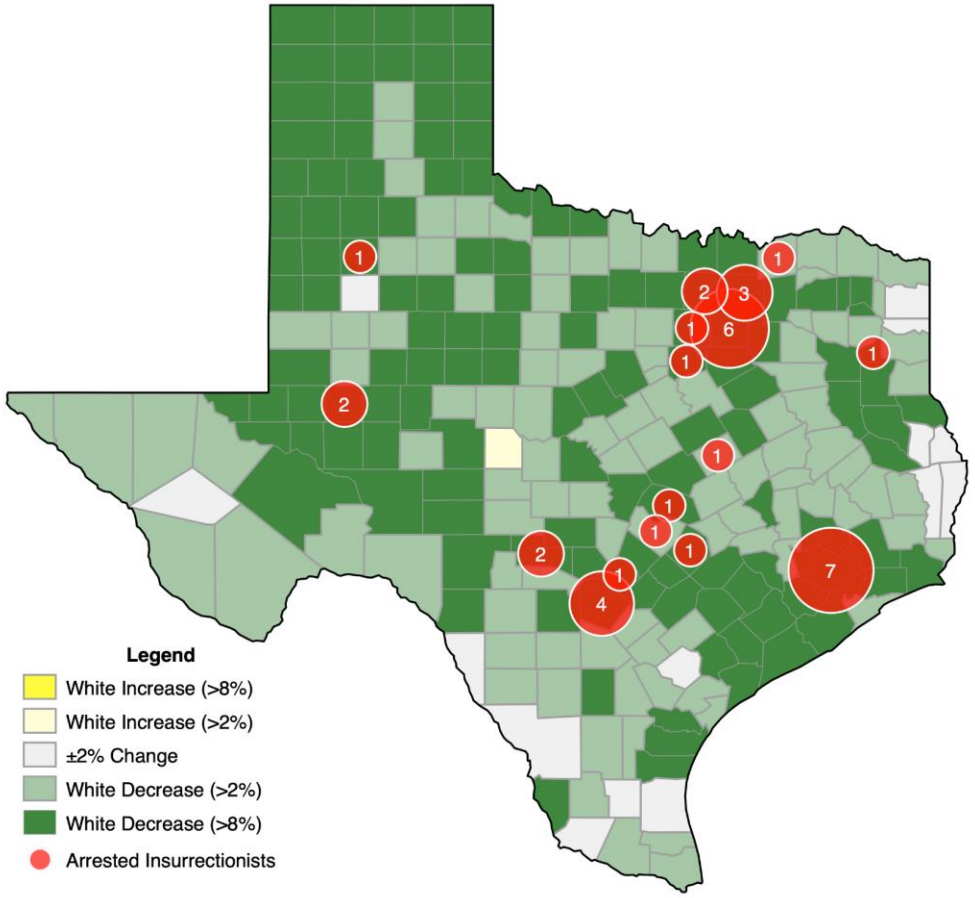

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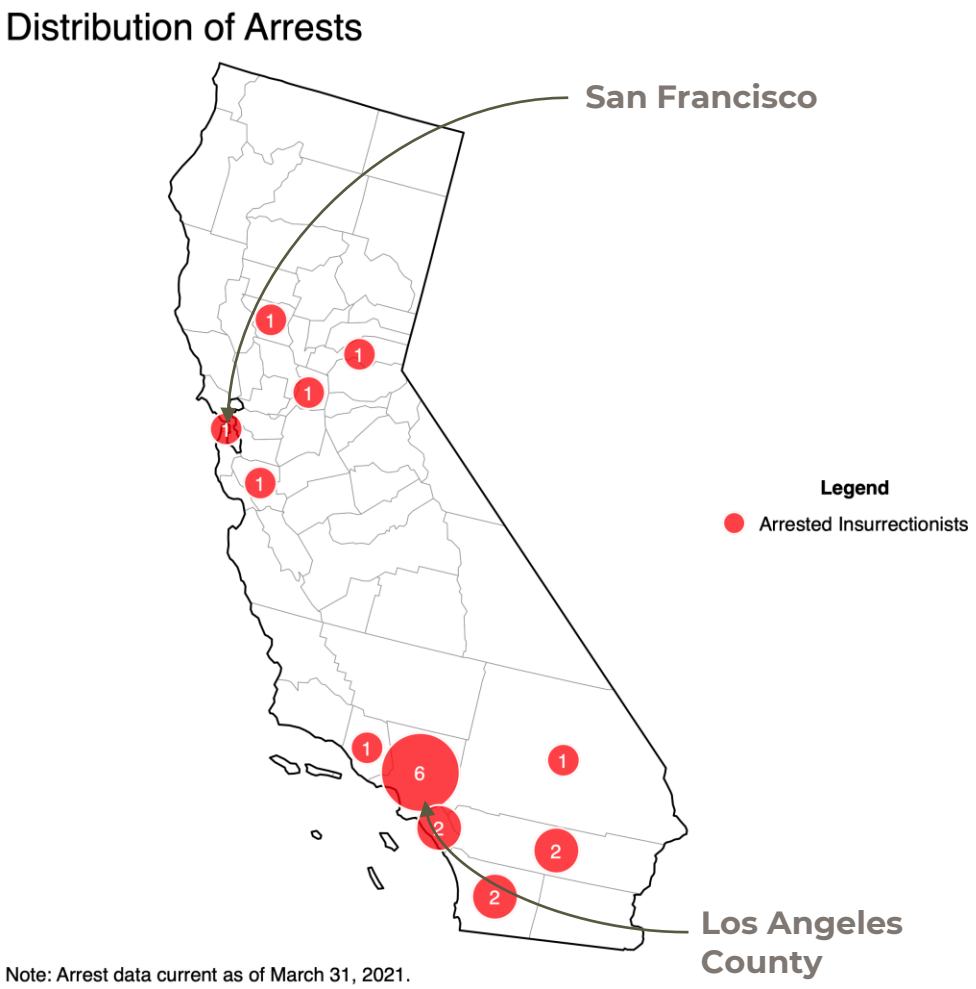
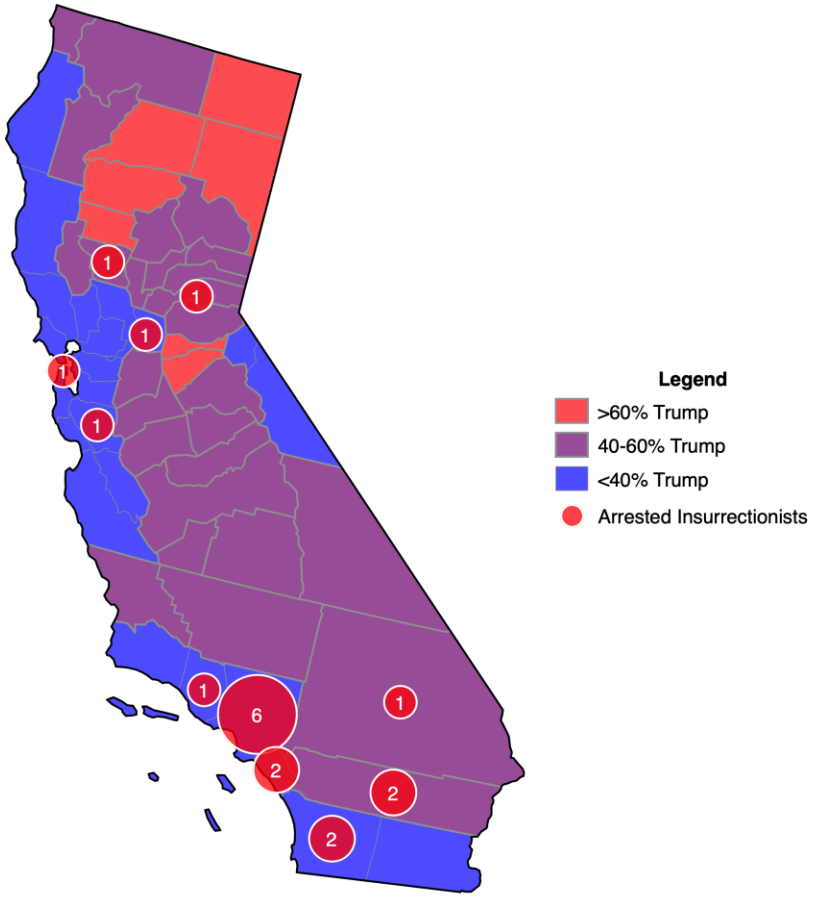
CALIFORNIA

19 arrests across 11 of California's 58 counties



CALIFORNIA

County % Voted for Trump 2020



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CALIFORNIA

Arrests in/adjacent to counties that became less white

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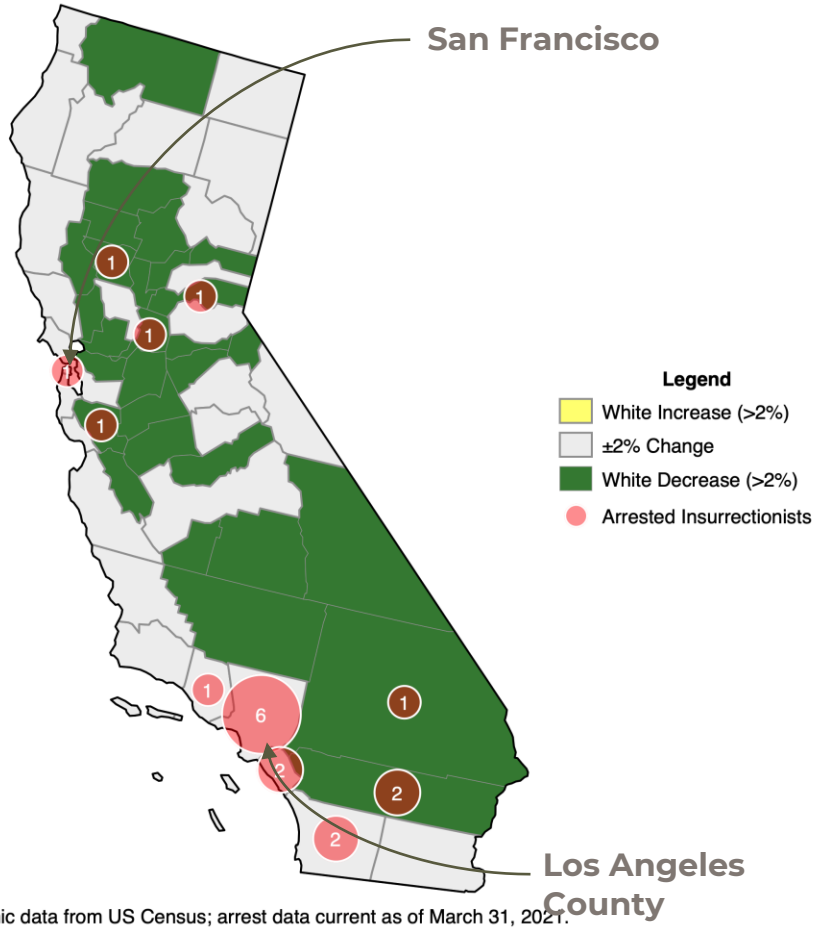

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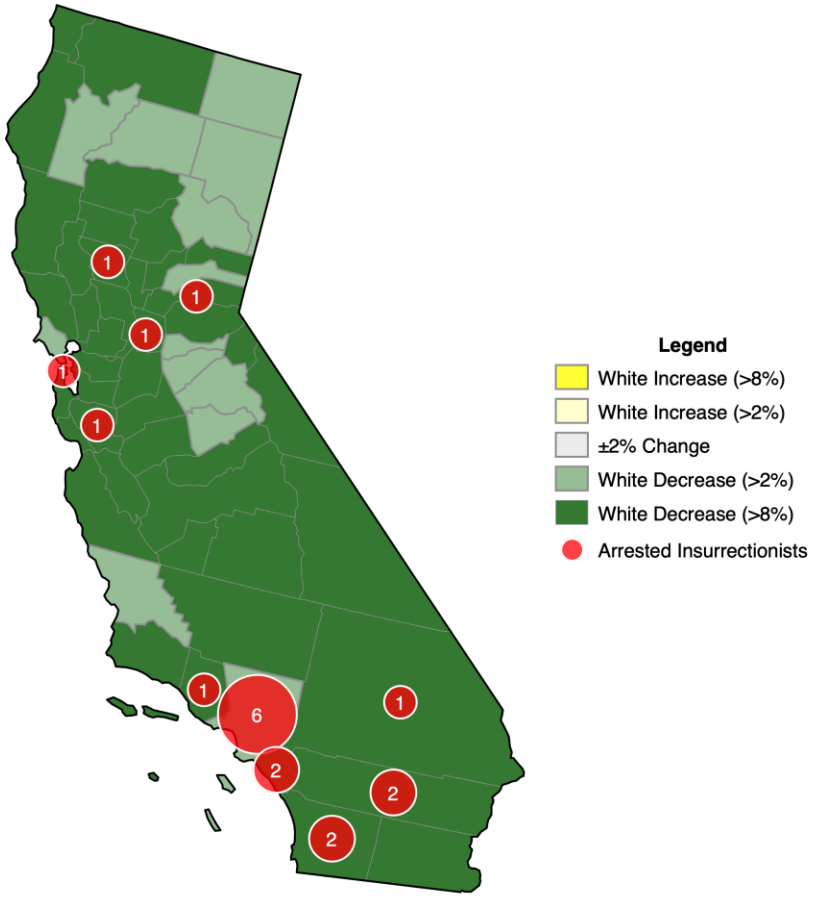

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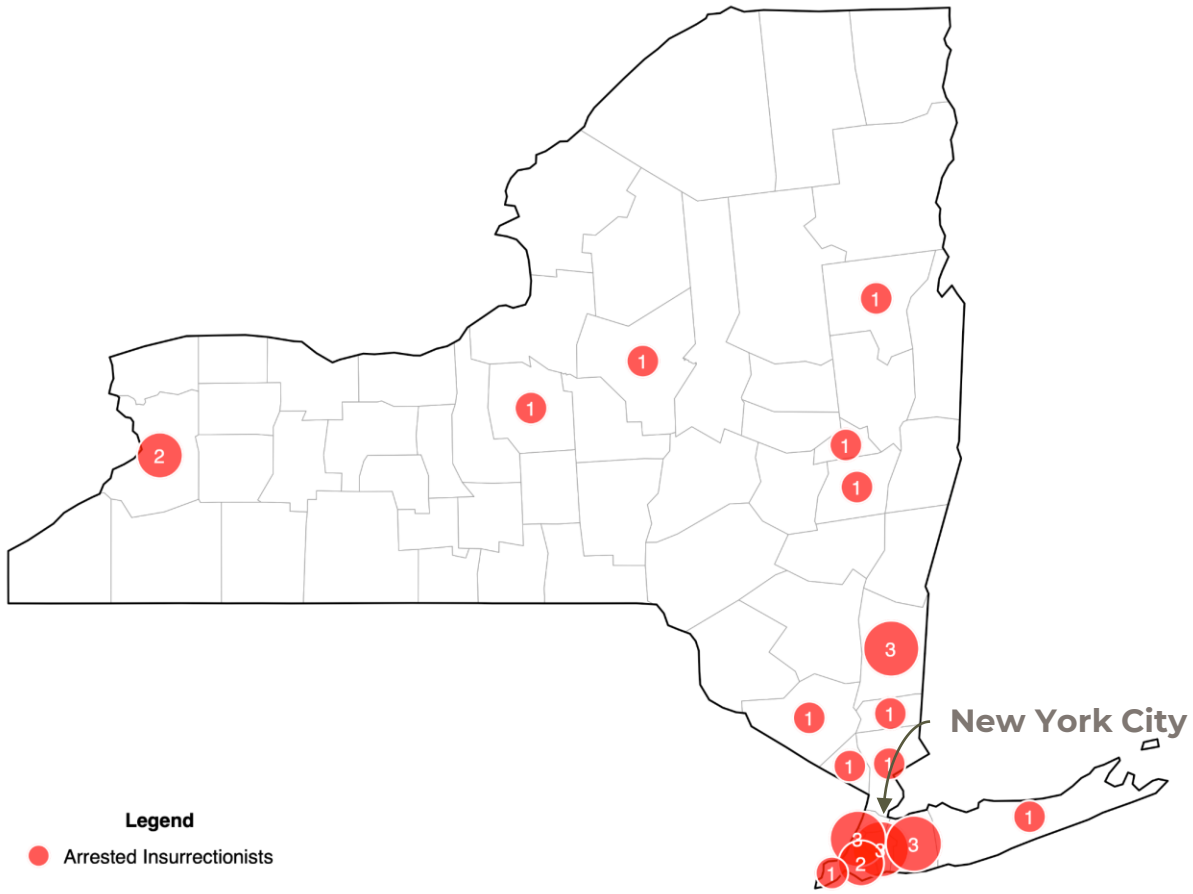
NEW YORK

Distribution of Arrests



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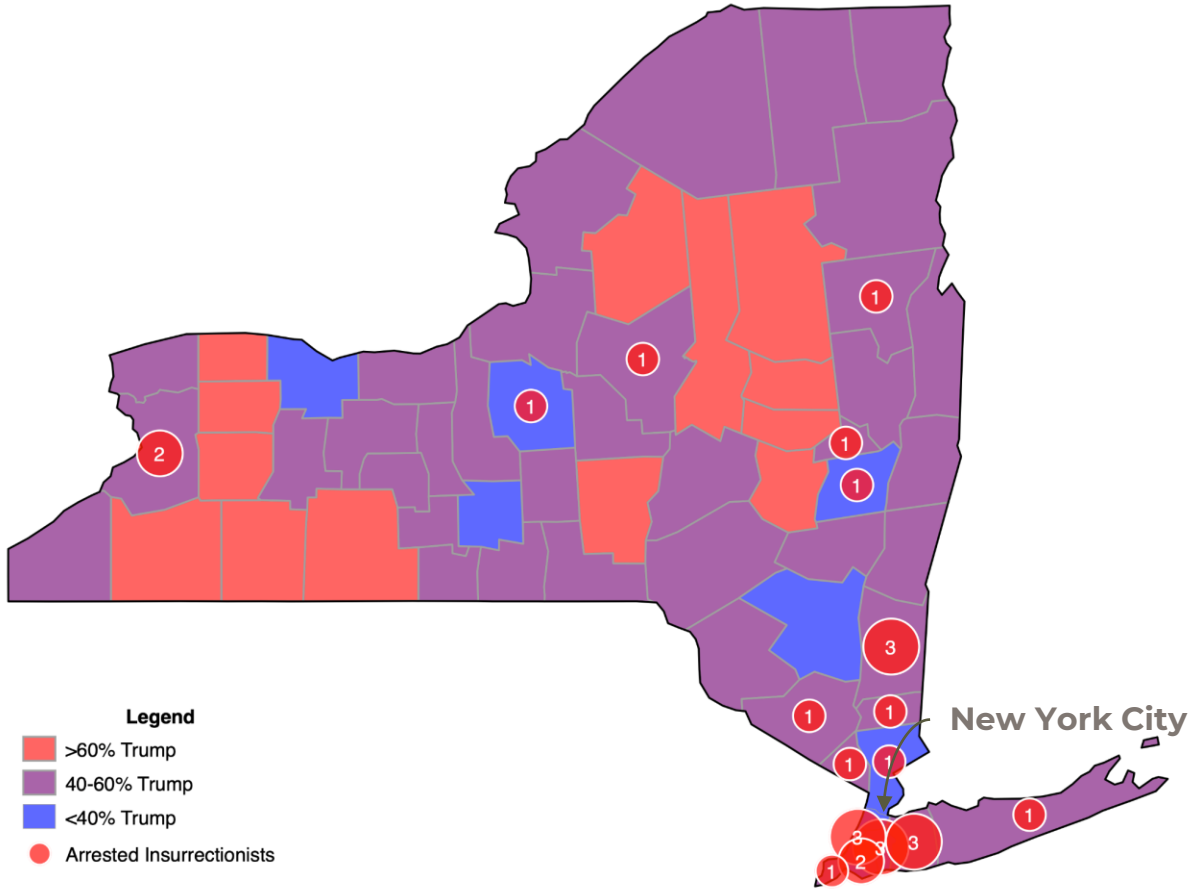
NEW YORK

County % Voted for Trump 2020



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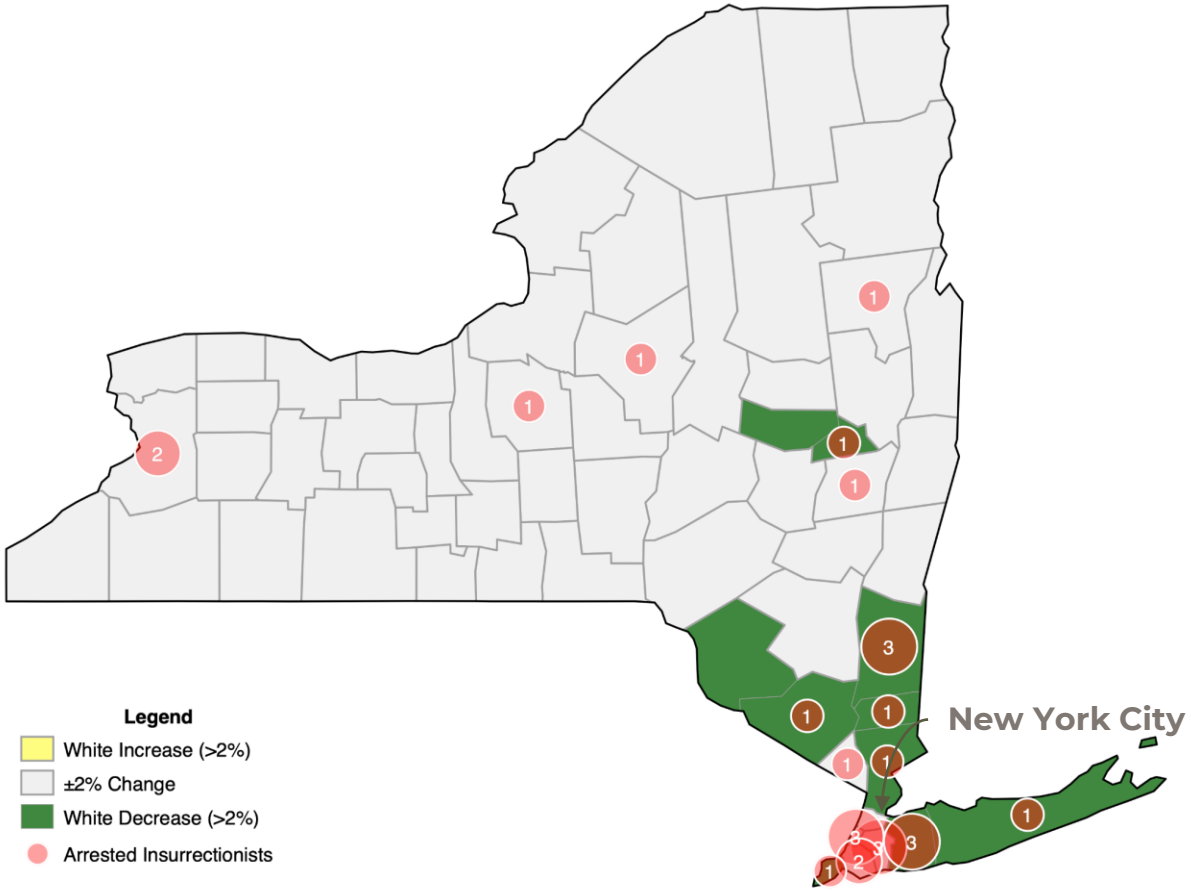
NEW YORK

Arrests in/adjacent to counties that became less white

% Change in Non-Hispanic White Population, 2015-2019



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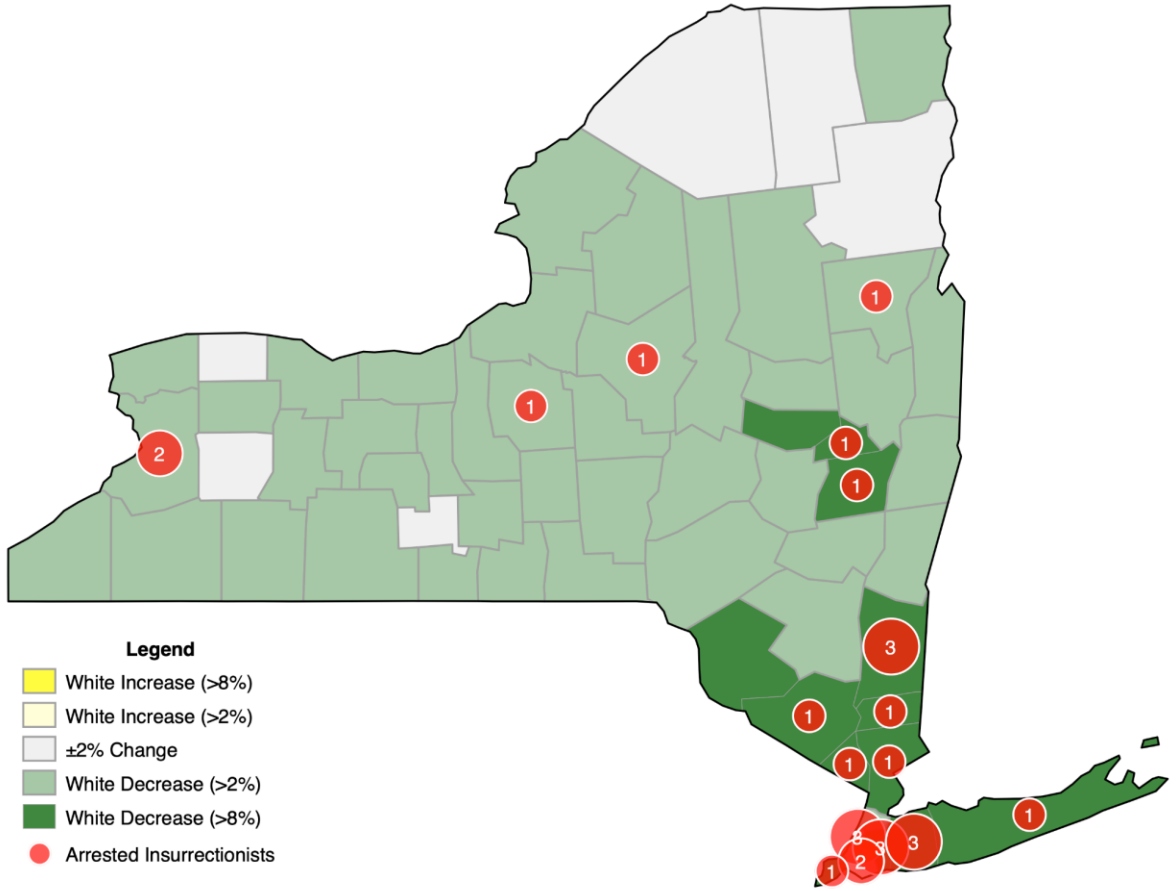
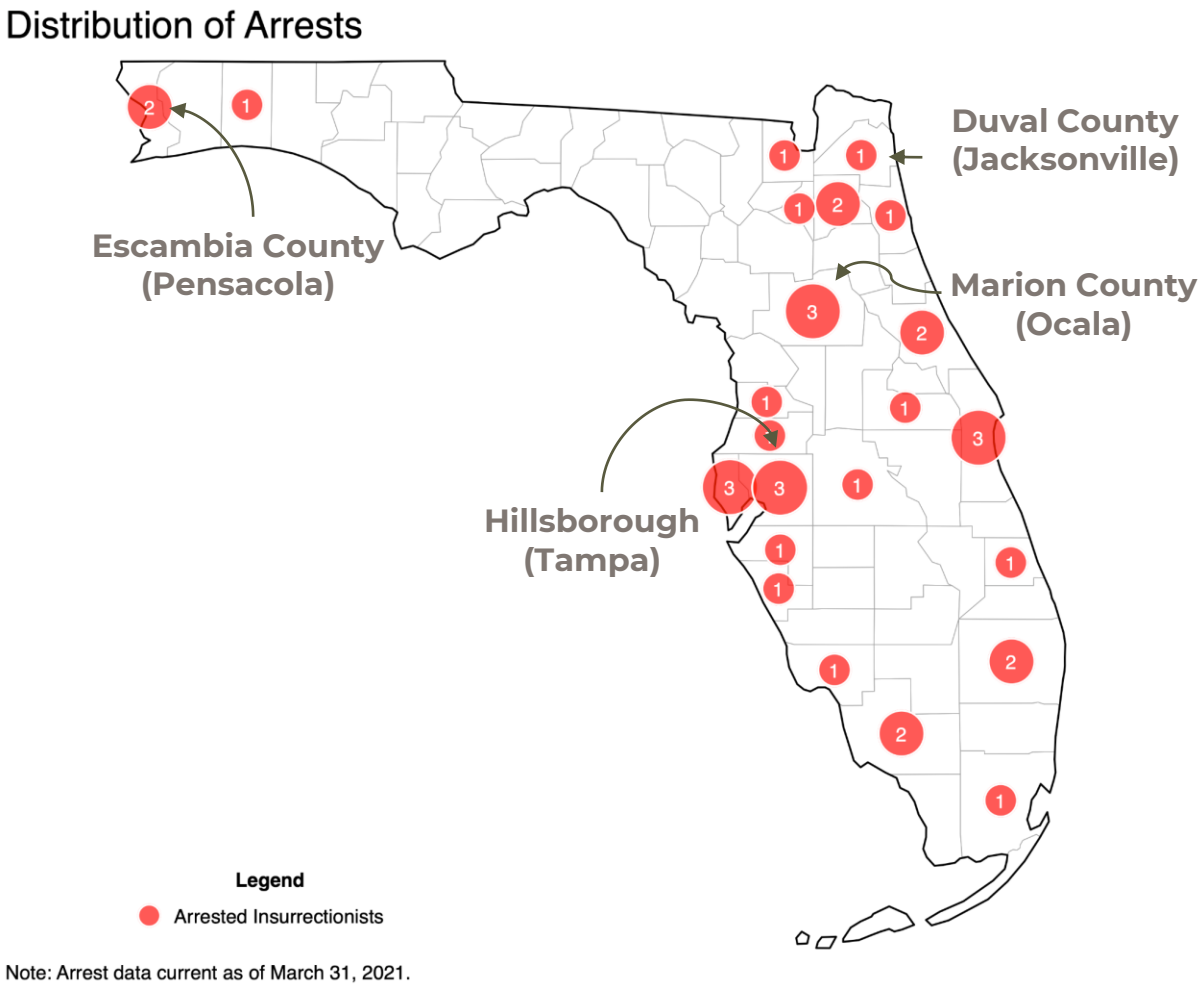
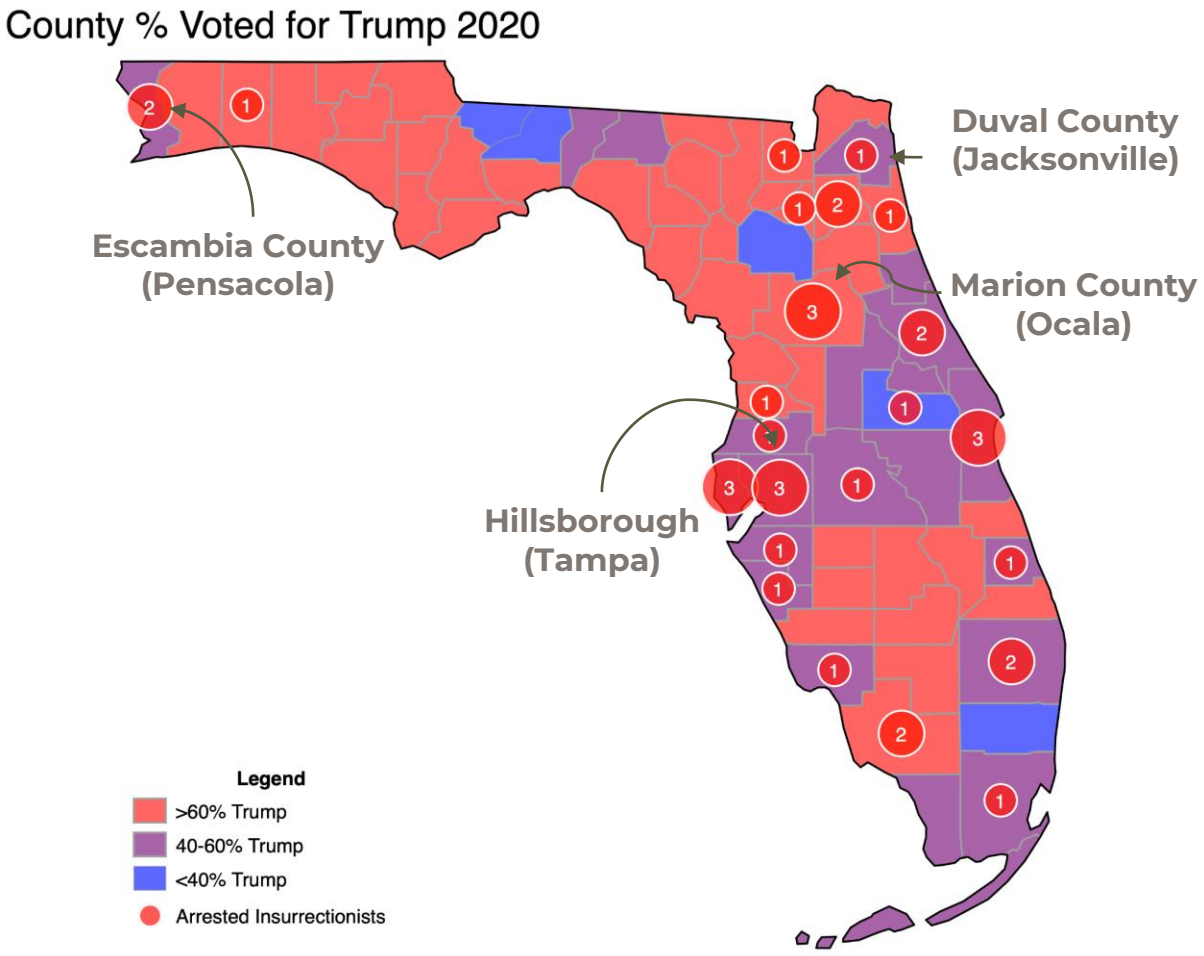


Note: Demographic data from US Census; arrest data current as of March 31, 2021.

FLORIDA


Distribution of Arrests
Escambia County (Pensacola)
Duval County (Jacksonville)
Marion County (Ocala)
Hillsborough (Tampa)
Legend
Arrested Insurrectionists
Note: Arrest data current as of March 31, 2021.

FLORIDA

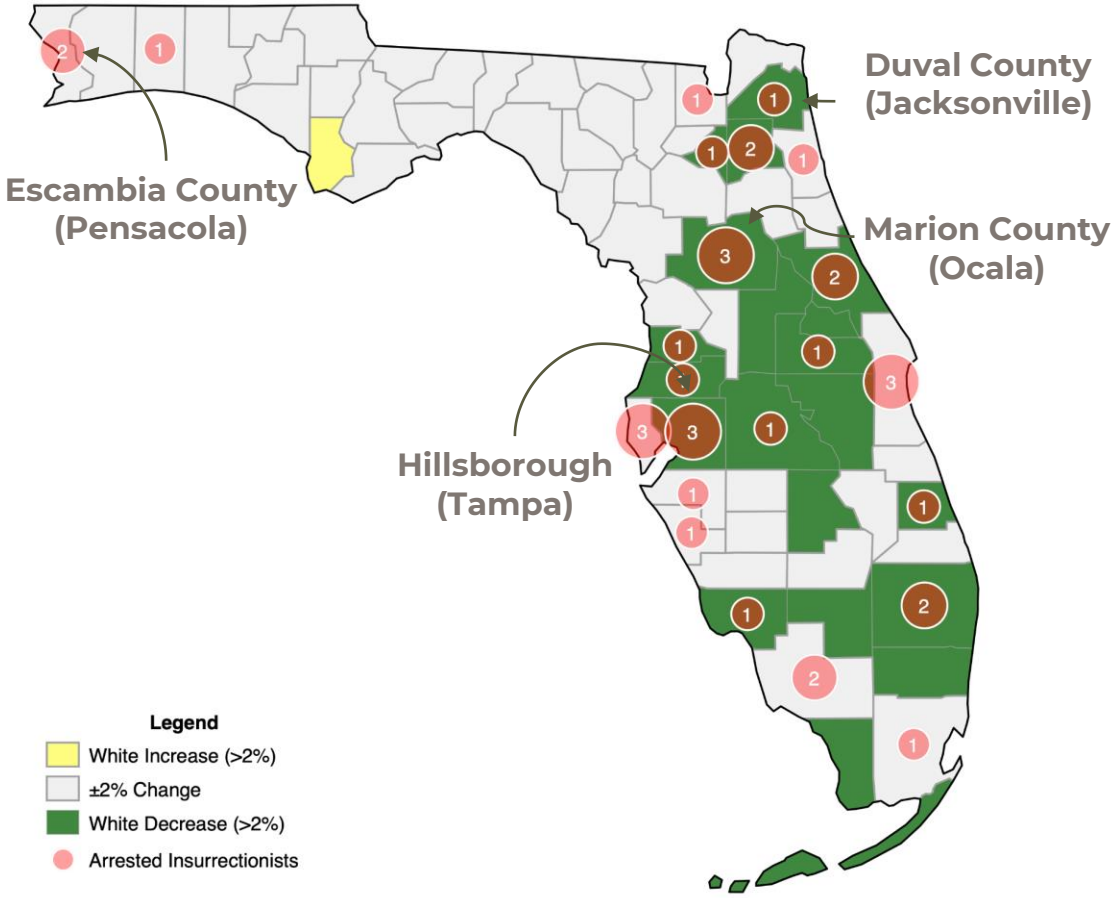


Note: Demographic data from US Census; arrest data current as of March 31, 2021.

FLORIDA

All but 4 arrests in/adjacent to counties that became less white

% Change in Non-Hispanic White Population, 2015-2019



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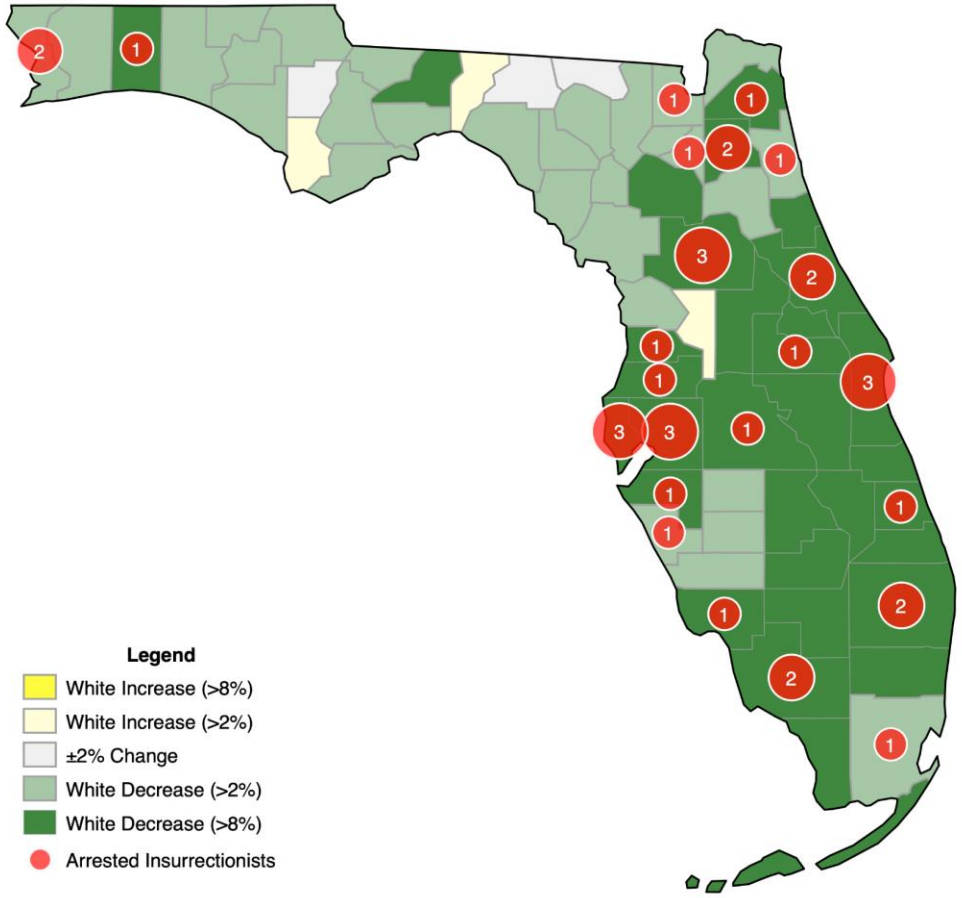

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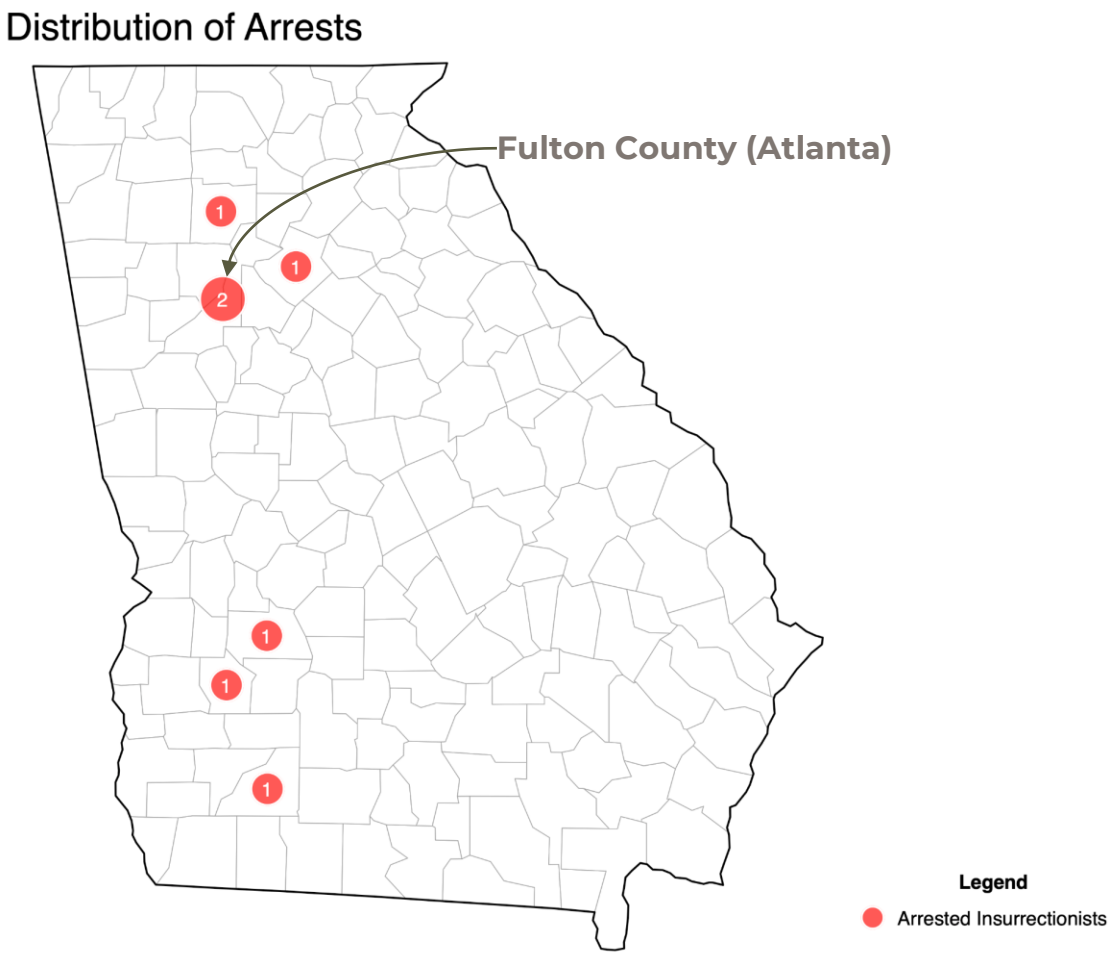
GEORGIA

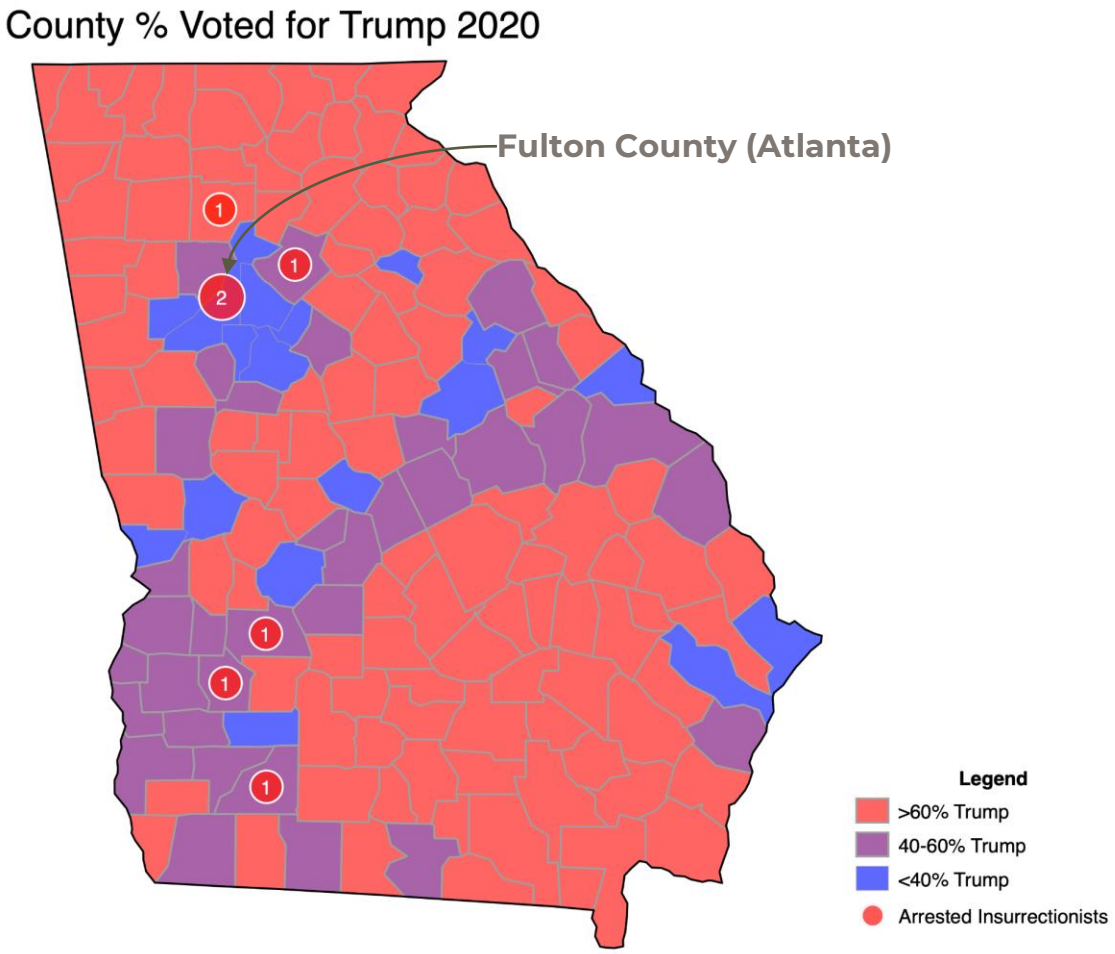
7 arrests across 6 of Georgia's 159 counties



Note: Arrest data current as of March 31, 2021.

GEORGIA

Arrests nearly all from counties Biden won



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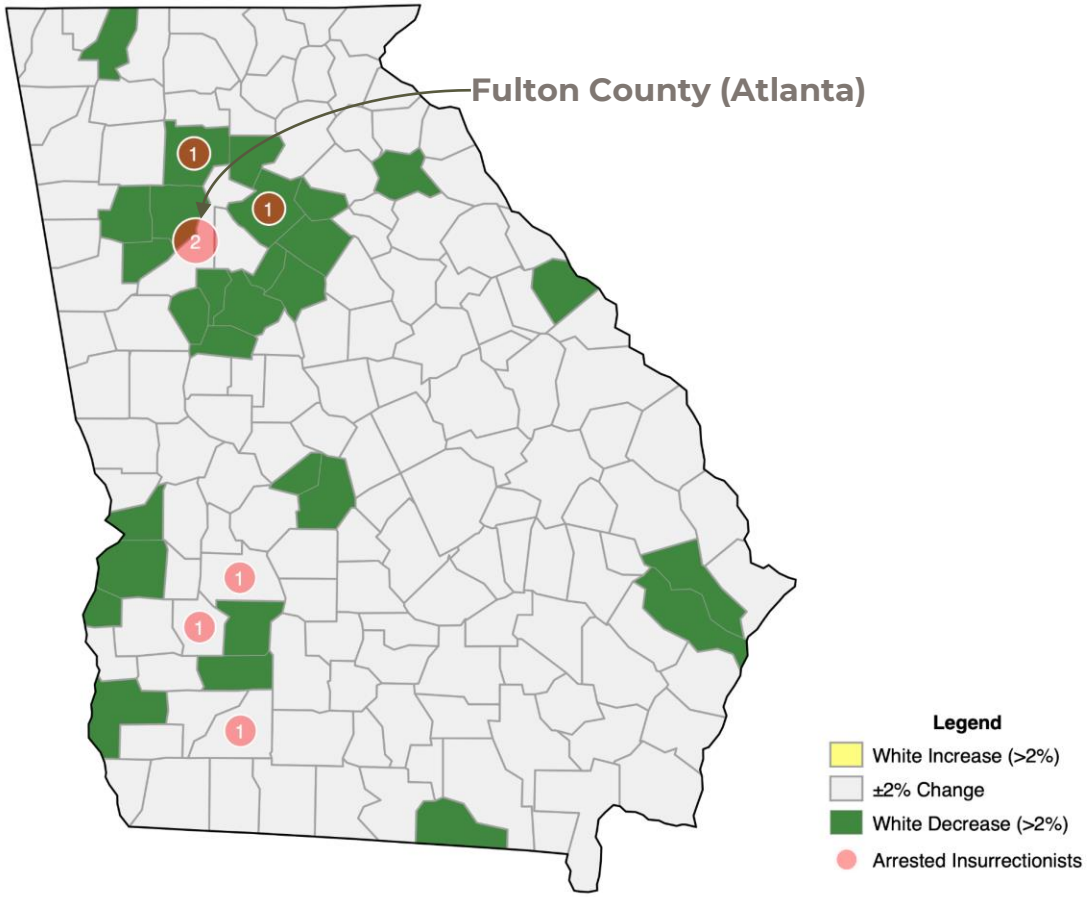
GEORGIA

Arrests in/adjacent to counties that became less white

% Change in Non-Hispanic White Population, 2015-2019



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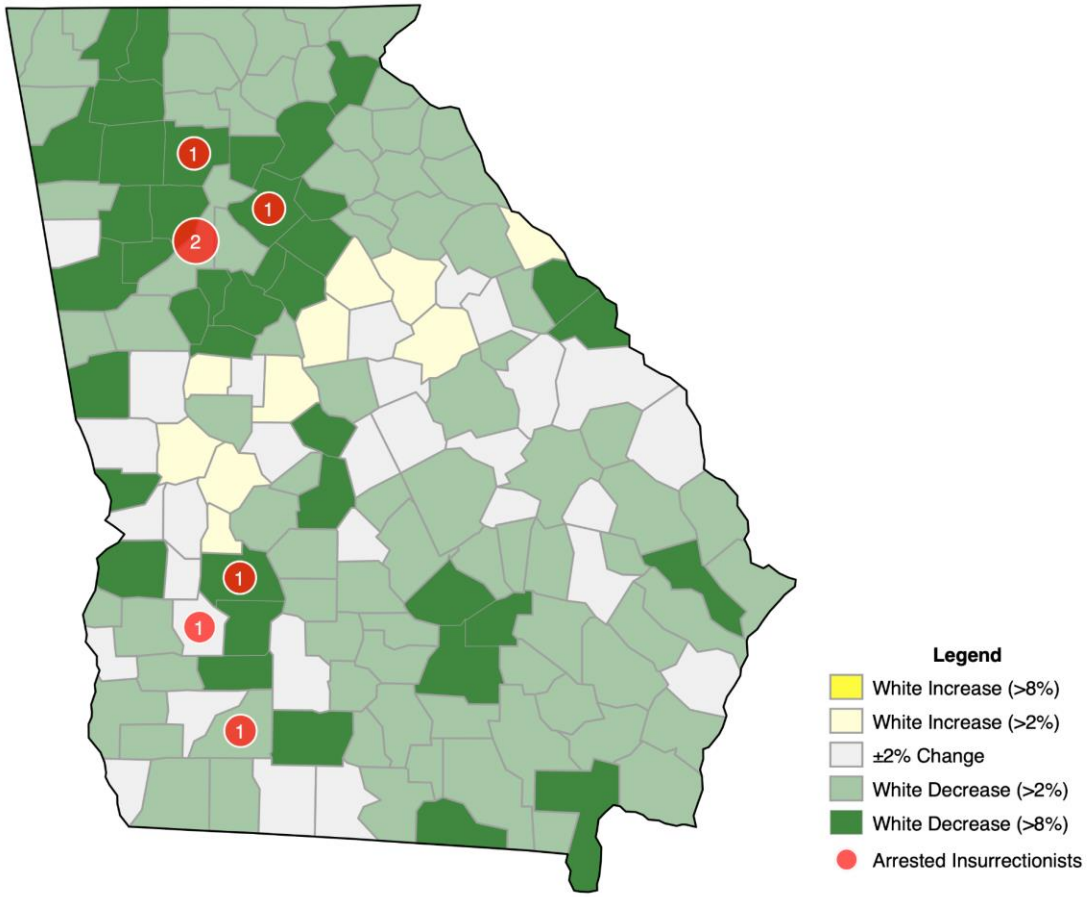

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WHY THE INSURRECTIONISTS CAME ON JANUARY 6

Analysis of motives in court documents

PRESIDENT TRUMP MOBILIZED THE VIOLENT MASS MOVEMENT

- **Robert L. Bauer of Kentucky, said, “He marched to the U.S. Capitol because President Trump said to do so.” (FBI interview)**

- **Gina Michelle Besignano of California said, “She felt called upon by President Donald Trump to travel to D.C. to change the outcome of the election, which she believes was stolen.” (Beverly Hills Courier interview).**

- **Jacob Chansley of Arizona, who invaded the Capitol in a Viking costume, said “he was in Washington as part of a group effort with other "patriots" from Arizona at the request of President Trump.” (FBI Interview)**

- **Valerie Elaine Ehrke of California said, “She heard President Trump tell the crowd to go to the U.S. Capitol… decided she wanted to be part of the crowd, and she walked to the U.S. Capitol.” (FBI interview)**

- **Jennifer Ryan of Texas, said she entered the Rotunda because “He said, ‘Be there,’ and So I went and I answered the call of my president.” (KTVT-TV Fort Worth interview)**

SPECIFIC FINDING #3

Storming the US Capitol was an act of collective political violence, inspired by a leader, President Trump, and not merely vandalism or trespassing for other purposes.

STUDY 2
ESTIMATING THE DRIVERS AND POTENTIAL SIZE OF THE INSURRECTIONIST MOVEMENT: A NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY

EXPLAINING SUPPORT FOR INSURRECTION
CPOST/NORC NATIONAL SURVEY

- **Nationally Representative Sample:**
  - 1,000 American Adults, Data collected March 13-14, 2021
  - Probability sample – gold standard among polls (AmeriSpeak)
  - Confidence interval for main research question: ±1.3%
- **Question:**
  - What factors drive the difference between:

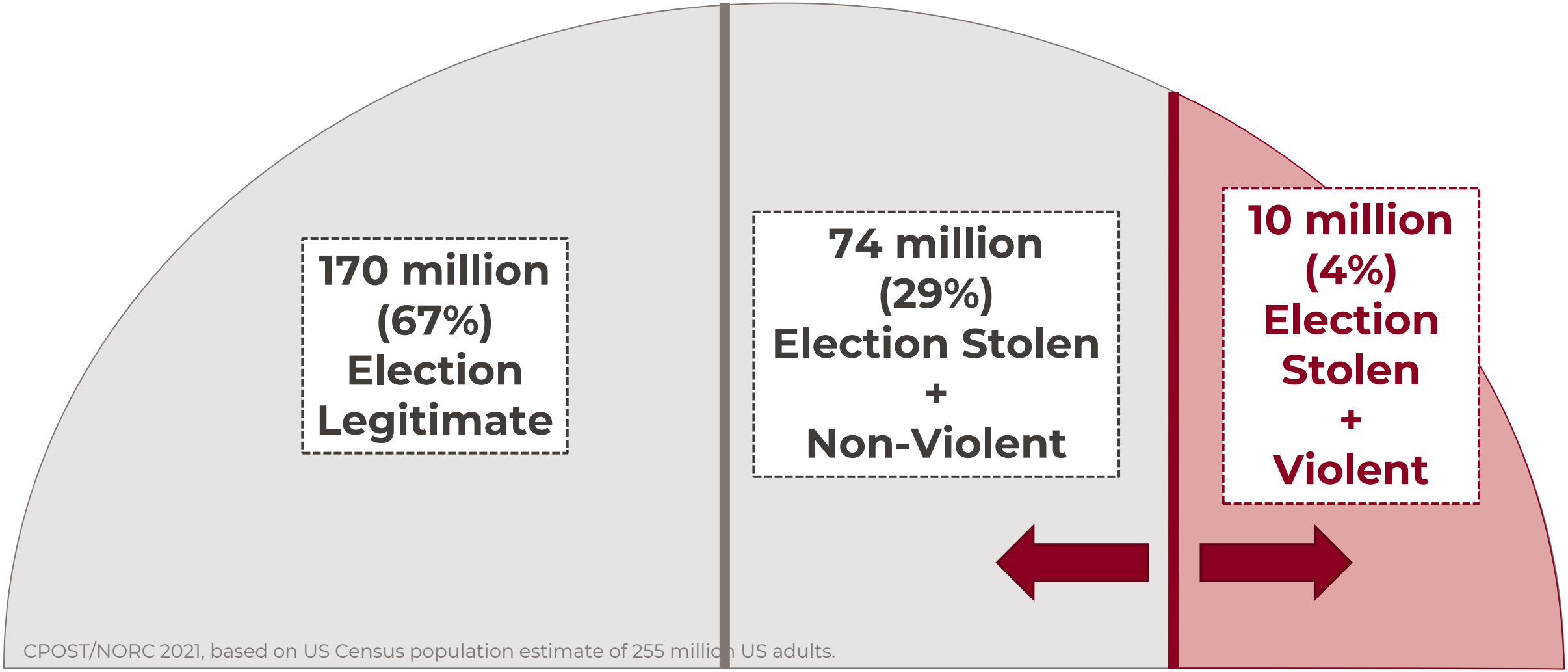
Those believe the 2020 election was stolen AND are willing to engage in a violent protest

Versus

2) Those who do not believe the election was stolen OR do believe the election was stolen but are unwilling to engage in violence?

WHAT MOVES THE RED LINE?

What separates the 4% of American Adults, from others?



CPOST/NORC 2021, based on US Census population estimate of 255 million US adults.

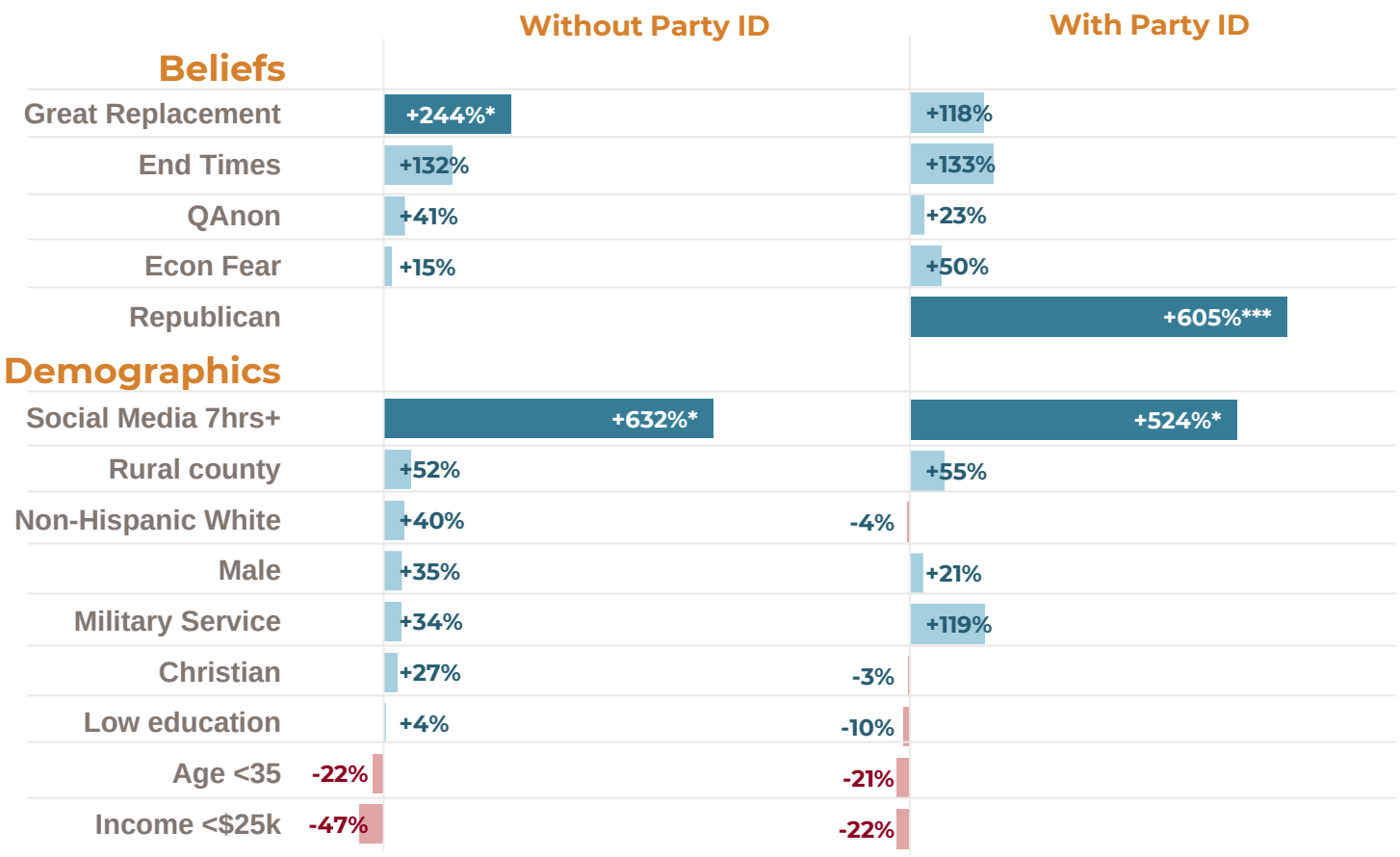
WHAT EXPLAINS THE 4%?

ESTIMATING THE DRIVERS OF THE INSURRECTIONIST MOVEMENT

BELIEF IN THE STEAL + VIOLENCE

Statistical Estimate of Factors Increasing the odds

Regression Results



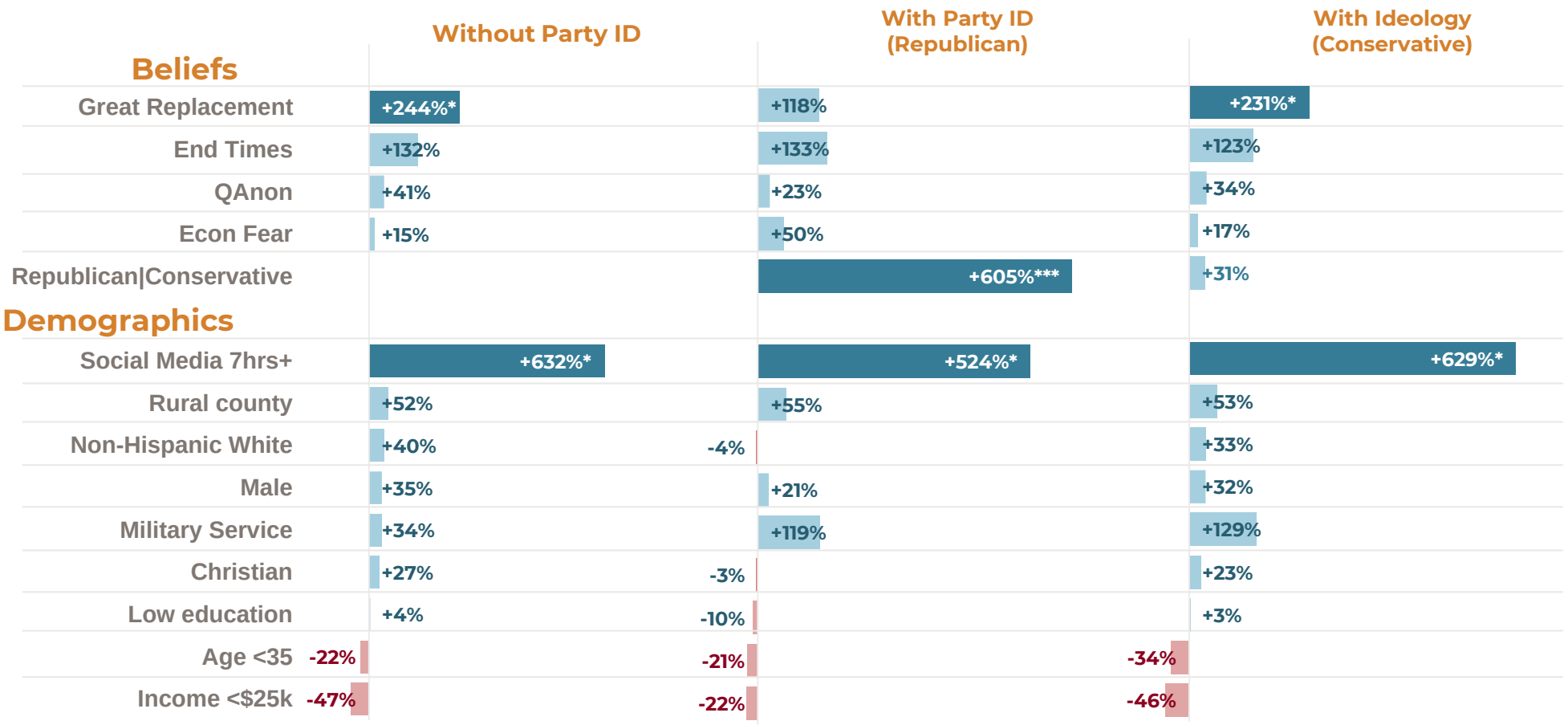
CPOST/NORC 2021, sample size 1,000. Results from logistic regression. All variables binary, descriptions in Appendix.

Key Findings

- **Fear of Racial Replacement**
- **High Social Media**
- **Replacement fear is robust across multiple specifications**
- **Republican is effectively substituting for belief that Minorities will have more rights in the future**
  - 50% of Republicans believe non-Whites will have more rights than them in the future.
  - Only 16% of non-Republicans hold this belief.

EFFECT OF PARTY ID AND IDEOLOGY

Results are consistent if party or ideology are included

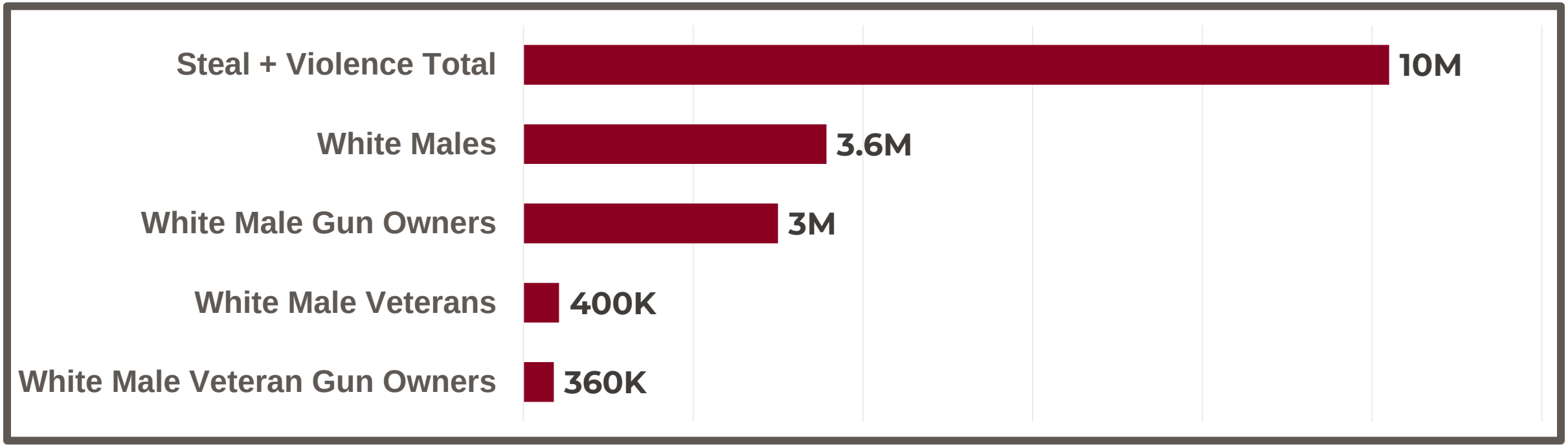


CPOST/NORC 2021, sample size 1,000. Results from logistic regression. All variables binary, descriptions in Appendix.

ESTIMATING THE MOBILIZATION POTENTIAL OF THE INSURRECTIONIST MOVEMENT

ESTIMATING SIZE OF CORE INSURRECTIONIST MOBILIZATION BASE

Breaking down the 4% (~10 Million US Adults)



- **Low end = A 360k army is nearly equal to the entire US National Guard (443k)**
- **Upper end = More than US Army + Army Reserve (1.3 million active duty + 1.1 million reserve)**

Calculations based on CPOST/NORC 2021.

SPECIFIC FINDING #4

Large Mobilization Potential,

Well over 360,000

Up to 3.6 million

Potential scenarios:

1) **Rise of lone wolf terrorism vs Minorities**
2) **Replay of "stolen election" violence during 2022 primaries and mid-terms**

STUDY 3
EXPLAINING SUPPORT FOR INSURRECTION: ONLINE SURVEY OF AMERICAN CONSERVATIVES

EXPLAINING SUPPORT FOR INSURRECTION AMONG CONSERVATIVE ADULTS FEBRUARY ONLINE SURVEY

- **Sample:**
  - Data collected between February 12 to March 10, 2021
  - Conservatives across all occupations, ages, and urban/rural locations
  - Survey 999 Conservative Adults (365 are white males)
- **Question:**
  - What factors drive the difference between:

Those believe the 2020 election was stolen AND are willing to engage in a violent protest

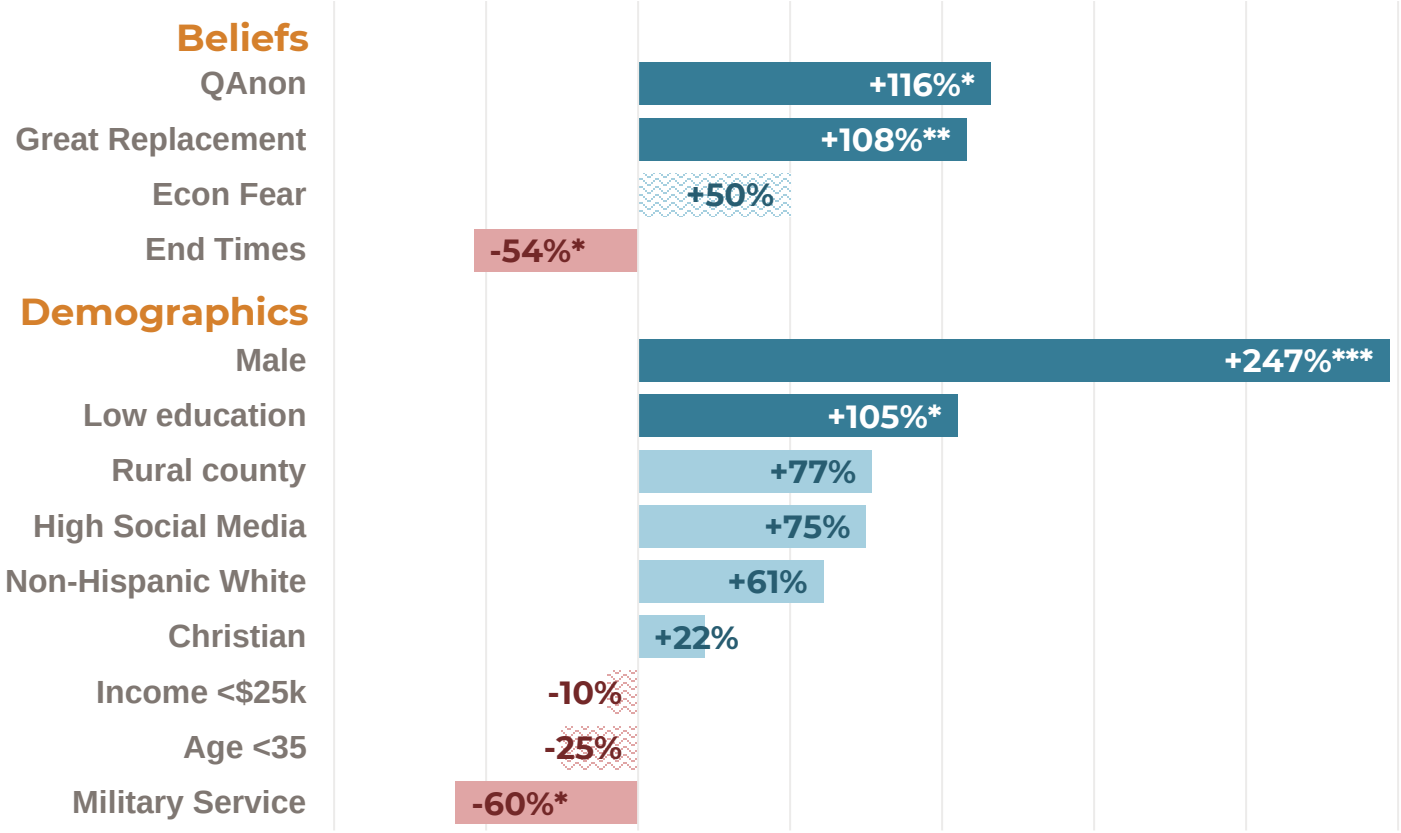
Versus

2) Those who do not believe the election was stolen OR do believe the election was stolen but are unwilling to engage in violence?

BELIEF IN THE STEAL + VIOLENCE

Belief in The Steal + Violence Vs. Other Conservatives

Factors Affecting Odds of being in 7% Conservatives in the Movement



Findings Overview

- **Factors Increasing likelihood:**
  - High school highest education
  - Belief in QAnon (broad)
  - Fear of Racial Replacement
  - Live in rural county
- **Factors reducing likelihood**
  - Belief End Times is near
  - Military service
- **No or uncertain effect on likelihood due to high margin of error**
  - Christian, non-Hispanic white, income, age, social media and economic fears

CPOST MTurk Online Survey 2021, sample size 999. Results from logistic regression. All variables binary, descriptions in Appendix.

FEAR OF "GREAT REPLACEMENT" MOST CONSISTENT FACTOR ACROSS STUDIES

- **STUDY 1: Rate of insurrectionist is four times higher in counties where % non-Hispanic whites declined the most.**
- **STUDY 2: CPOST/NORC Survey: Among Americans, believing that blacks and Hispanics are overtaking Whites increases odds of being in the insurrectionist movement three-fold.**
- **STUDY 3: CPOST/MTurk → Among conservative Americans, fear that blacks and Hispanics will have more rights than whites increases odds of being in the insurrectionist movement two-fold.**

KEY IMPLICATION

Left to its own, the movement is growing

All ingredients there to accelerate movement growth:

- A leader with a modicum of legitimacy and demonstrated support for extra-legal activity
- Grievances and fears perceived by large masses of people (stolen election, ‘great replacement’, etc,.)
- A Deadly Focal Point event: The Jan 6 storming of the US Capitol, leaving 5 dead

WHY SPEED IS VITAL

- **Focusing on failures in law enforcement and security will not provide answers to the problem America faces**
- **Need to understand the real drivers of fear to combat polarizing narratives long before mid-terms**
- **There is a very real danger of**
  - another focal point
  - producing new narrative impetus
  - further bleeding into various publics and congealing towards violence

ACTION PLAN: NEXT STEPS

COMPLETE SYSTEMATIC SURVEY:

- Conduct Monthly and Expanded nationally representative surveys from April 2021 thru November 2022
- Create Panel of policy practitioners and academic experts to assess findings and develop viable policy initiatives
- Work in conjunction with US Government to accelerate understanding and response

START NOW!

CPOST PANEL APRIL 6

- **Online panel Hosted by Truman Foundation:**
  - Secretary Jeh Johnson
  - Prof. Robert A. Pape on political violence, violent extremist narratives, militant propaganda and mobilization
  - Prof. Robert D. Putnam on American political social science, culture and society
- **Three months from Capitol Riot**
- **Outlining findings on data**
- **Exploring potential solutions**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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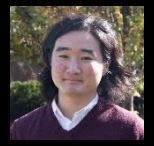

Emerson Ahn

Jake Gillis

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Ketaki Tavan

Eliza Migdal

Carolyn Hammond

Adele Malle

Rachel Citrin

Fiona Brauer

Bertrand Chu

Aidan Aronoff

Tom Blaubach

Lola Fisher

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

DEFINITION OF KEY VARIABLES

County Analysis (Study 1)

- **DV:** County count of insurrectionist arrests for all US counties; min=0, max=7
- **Population:** County population in 2019 (Census/ACS)
- **Decline in White Population:** % change in non-Hispanic White population from 2015 to 2019 (Census/ACS)
- **Unemployment Rate:** Average county unemployment (percent), Jan-Nov 2020 (BLS)
- **Value of Social Capital:** County-level Index of social capital (Social Capital Project)
- **Bankruptcy Rate:** County yearly bankruptcy filings (any), average between 2000-2019 (RAND)
- **Trump Vote Share:** County % voted for Trump (David Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections)
- **Distance to DC:** Linear distance from county centroid to DC in km.
- **Measure of Rural:** Non-core, micropolitian, and small metro county (Bureau of Health Statistics).

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS*

NORC and MTurk Surveys (Studies 2 and 3)

- **Belief in the Steal:** Do not trust election results.
- **Violence:** Willingness to participate in violent protest.

Movement (DV) = Belief in steal X Violence

- **QAnon:** Belief that QAnon exposes truths about the inner workings of the government.
- **Great Replacement:** Belief Whites are losing status relative to Minorities.
- **Econ Fear:** Concern about financial losses.
- **End Times:** Belief that Jesus will return soon.
- **Male:** Identify as Male.
- **Low education:** Highest education is high school or lower.
- **Rural county:** County of residence defined as non-core, micropolitian, and small metro (Bureau of Health Statistics).
- **High Social Media:** Use of social media compared to average.
- **Non-Hispanic White:** Race is non-Hispanic White.
- **Christian:** Religion is Christian (any type).
- **Income <$25k:** Annual income reported as lower than $25,000.
- **Age <35:** Age is below 35.
- **Military Service:** Veteran of or currently serving in the US Armed Forces or National Guard.
- **Republican:** Self-identified strong and leaning Republican.
- **Conservative:** Self-identified strong and leaning conservative.

* More detail available upon request

MODEL DESCRIPTIONS

- **Study 1:** negative binomial regression, with dependent variable county count of arrests. Results presented as incidence response ratios and interpreted as the effect of a one-unit change on the rate of insurrectionists from a county (controlling for the other factors in the model).
- **Study 2:** weighted logistic regression, with dependent variable belief in steal and would attend violent protest. Results presented as odds ratios and interpreted as the change in odds of steal/violence due to a factor (controlling for the other factors in the model).
- **Study 3:** (unweighted) logistic regression, with dependent variable belief in steal and would attend violent protest. Results presented as odds ratios and interpreted as the change in odds of steal/violence due to a factor (controlling for the other factors in the model).

MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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